荒谷の顔を描くのが
楽しすぎる。

勝木 光

SHONEN
MAGAZINE
COMICS

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ

13

勝木 光

KCM4329

KC

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
13
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ベイビーステップ 1 ～以下続刊

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

仲間のため…、何より自分のために!!

Cover Design／Veia

2010 7
KC

Baby Steps

13

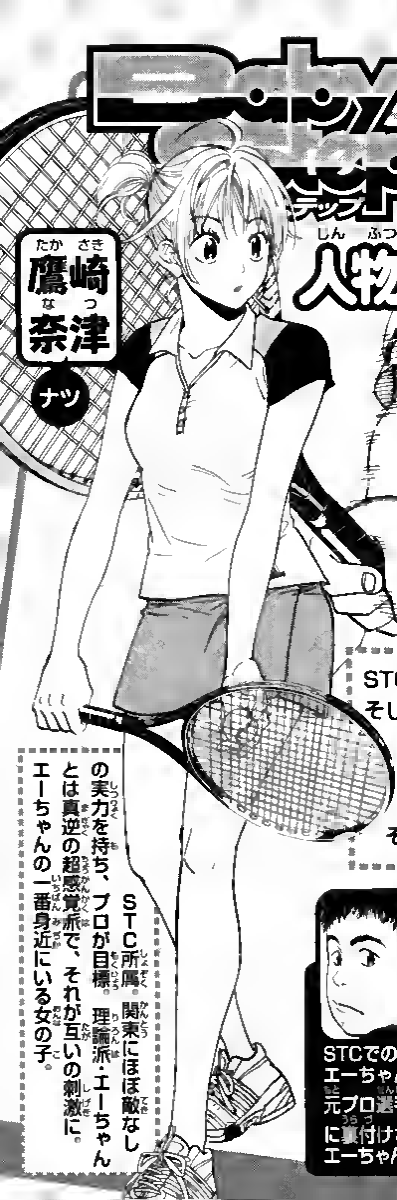
ベイビーステップ

勝木（かつき） 光（ひかる）

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ

人物紹介

鷹崎奈津（ナツ）



エーちゃん

丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。「次の全日本ジュニアで優勝、そしてプロへ」が命題。そこで優勝できなければプロを諦めるという条件付きで、テニス最優先の生活を送っている。同じ夢を持つナツは心の支え。そして依然、友達以上恋人未満。

佐々木梅子

エーちゃんのクラスメイトで、試合には必ず応援に来てくれる心強い応援団。

彩山小次郎

青井コーチ

STCでのエーちゃんのコーチ。元プロ選手という経験に裏付けされた指導でエーちゃんをサポート。

STC所属。関東にほぼ敵なしの実力を持ち、プロが目標。理論派・エーちゃんとは真逆の超感覚派で、それが互いの刺激に。エーちゃんの一番身近にいる女の子。

大目標「全日本ジュニア」が見えてきた!?

熱戦!! 神奈川県ジュニアテニス大会!

宮川に勝利し勢いにのった
エーちゃんは、順調に
駒を進め‥‥

準決勝

第2シード
最上紀彦
に完勝!!

2回戦

Win

難関、宮川に
勝利!

ついに
決勝へ!

相手は予想どおりの

荒谷寛!!

互いに絶対に
譲れない
一戦が
始まる!!!

ライバルは、神奈川だけでなく全国に!

難波江優

不得意が少なくて、
データ重視のプレー
完敗を喫したエーちゃんに
とって眼前の壁。二人が次に
対戦するのは、関東ジュニアか!?

上側的な精神力
井出義明

懐足が生むライジング
神田久志

岡田隆行
破壊力アンドンのライジング

Baby Steps

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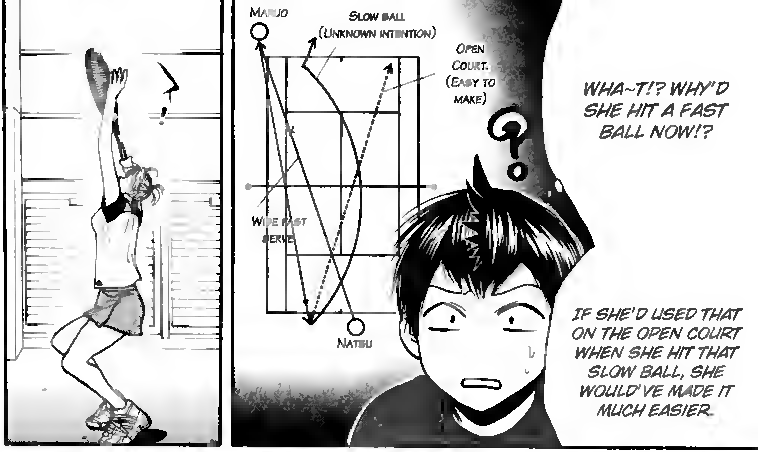
to Giant Strides

30 - LOVE.
RGH...
#113 SENSATION
LIKE I THOUGHT, I CAN'T THINK OF NACCHAN AS NABAE-KUN...
FOR NOW, I BETTER FOCUS ON LEARNING ABOUT NACCHAN'S TENNIS LIKE COACH AOI SAID.
SO I CAN PLAY MORE INSTINC-TIVELY...
Stay true

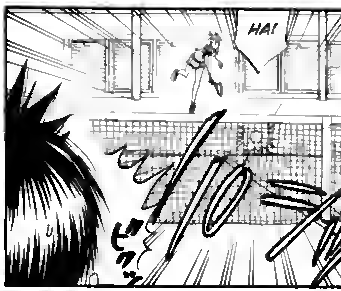
A WIDE, FAST SERVE.
MNG~
I CAN RETURN IT IF I STAY FOCUSED...
staytrue
WHY'S SHE HITTING STRAIGHT? WITH A SLOW BALL, TOO!?
EVEN THOUGH SHE CREATED AN OPEN COURT WITH HER WIDE SERVE...
HUH...!?

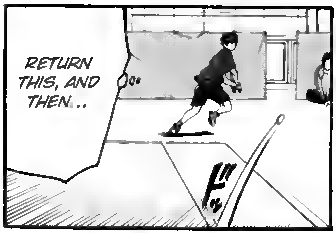
IF SO, THEN I'LL HIT A DEEP CROSS.
HA!
OUT. 40 - LOVE.
NOW IT'S A FAST BALL!?


MARUO
SLOW BALL
(UNKNOWN INTENTION)
OPEN COURT.
(EASY TO MAKE)
WIDE FAST SERVE
NATSU
WHA~T!? WHY'D SHE HIT A FAST BALL NOW!?
IF SHE'D USED THAT ON THE OPEN COURT WHEN SHE HIT THAT SLOW BALL, SHE WOULD'VE MADE IT MUCH EASIER.

BUT THE SECOND SERVE SHOULD GIVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY..

AND SHE'S AGGRESSIVE TOO. I BETTER WATCH OUT
SHE CAN HIT EVEN FASTER?


HA!


RETURN THIS, AND THEN..

HA!

Ah!

AT THE NET!?
HA!
RGH~

GAME, NATSU. 1 - 0.
うむ!
TH-THAT WAS TOTALLY WEIRD!!
?
CENTER SERVE, THEN DASH AGAINST A MALE OPPO-NENT?
?
IT'S TOTALLY RECKLESS, NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT!!

スタスタ
うーん
OR WAS THAT JUST ON A WHIM?
...BUT SINCE IT ENDED UP DROPPING MY GUARD WAS THAT A PLAN OF HERS?

I DON'T GET IT AT ALL...
stay true
にっ

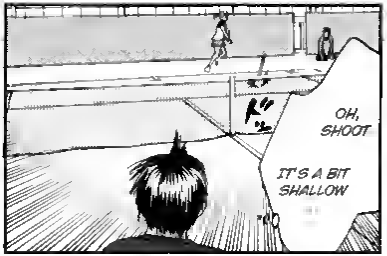
DON'T HOLD BACK, AND...
BUT, I SHOULD DEFINITELY KEEP MY SERVE GAMES.
HA!
WOW THAT'S FAST!
OUCH, THAT'S HARSH AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A MAN?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO PLAY SERIOUSLY!!

NATSU! GET USED TO THAT SPEED.
IF YOU CAN RETURN MEN'S SERVES, IT GETS PRETTY EASY TO RETURN WOMEN'S SERVES.
OKAY!
HO!
HA!
SHE TOUCHED IT EVEN THOUGH IT WENT IN PROPERLY ...

WOW... EI-CHAN'S SERVE
IS SO AMAZING.
GAME, MARUO. 1 - 1
BUT I'LL RETURN IT NEXT TIME!
HA!

...NO SHE'S NOT!!

A DEEP SLICE...
NACCHAN WILL USE IT TO MOVE FORWARD THIS TI...


OH, SHOOT
IT'S A BIT SHALLOW

CRAP MY REACTION GETS A STEP SLOWER BECAUSE IT'S DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I'M IMAGINING...

SHE'S NOT ATTACKING EVEN THOUGH IT WAS WEAK.
...DOES THAT MEAN SHE'S NOT GOOD AT MOVING FROM FRONT TO BACK?

HA!

FOR-
WARD!!
Stay true
IN THAT CASE, I'LL HIT A DEEP ONE NEXT...

GAME, MARUO. 2 - 1

YOU'RE DOING REALLY WELL SO FAR.
BUT MARUO-KUN WILL START ATTACKING FROM THE FRONT AND THE BACK, SO BE CAREFUL
RIGHT.

I TOLD YOU, NATSU'S AN INSTINCTIVE PLAYER.
IT'S CAUSE I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT SHE'S THINKING...

YOUR TIMING'S BEEN A BIT OFF SINCE THE START.
IF NATSU HAD MEN'S LEVEL FOOTWORK, YOU'D HAVE GOTTEN OWNED.

IN SHORT, NATSU IS SIMPLY REACTING ON A VAGUE INTUITION SHE GETS FROM YOUR PERSONALITY, THE CURRENT SITUATION, THE OVERALL ATMOSPHERE, AND STUFF LIKE THAT.
SHE'S NOT PLAYING BASED ON A SOLID STRATEGIC PLAN.
THAT'S THE AMAZING THING ABOUT HER.
FIRST, YOU SHOULD OBSERVE YOUR OPPONENT CAREFULLY.
NOT JUST BASED ON DATA, BUT ALSO USING YOUR INTUITION.
H-HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO ATTACK THEN..
YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU MAY TRY.
SINCE SHE'S NOT PLAYING BASED ON REASON,
WHAT..
ONCE YOU SQUEEZE THOSE INTO YOUR BRAIN, LOOK CAREFULLY AT THE NATSU IN FRONT OF YOU.
I'M SURE YOUR NOTES WILL HELP A LOT.
THEY'LL HELP YOU LEARN ABOUT NATSU IN TERMS OF PURE DATA
15-0
30-0
40-0

SINCE YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND HER WITH YOUR HEAD,
LOOK AT HER WITH YOUR EYES,
FEEL IT WITH YOUR BODY,
THEN FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS AND PLAY.
DON'T YOU THINK THIS IS A LOT LIKE RELATIONSHIPS?
You can never understand woman, right?
OR IS THIS TOO FAST FOR YOU?
OOPS, IT'S ALMOST TIME!
LOOK, FEEL, AND FOLLOW MY INSTINCTS...
HA!
SHE FINALLY STARTED RETURNING MY SERVES!!

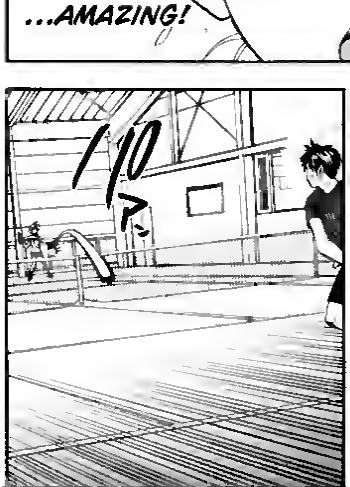
AS I EXPECTED, NACCHAN'S INCREDIBLE!!
BEFORE, MIKE TOLD ME THAT NACCHAN'S MENTALITY IS ON A GENIUS LEVEL.
BUT IT REALLY IS TRUE...
I MIGHT END UP FIGHTING WITH THAT KIND OF AN OPPONENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE...
EVEN IF IT'S JUST A LITTLE BIT, I WANNA ABSORB IT...
AND MAKE IT MINE.

IN ORDER FOR ALL HIS BALLS TO KEEP ME MOVING BACK AND FORTH,
BUT, IT'S NOT JUST THAT.
HE'S CONTROLLING HIS SHOTS AND THINKING SEVERAL STEPS AHEAD.

HA!

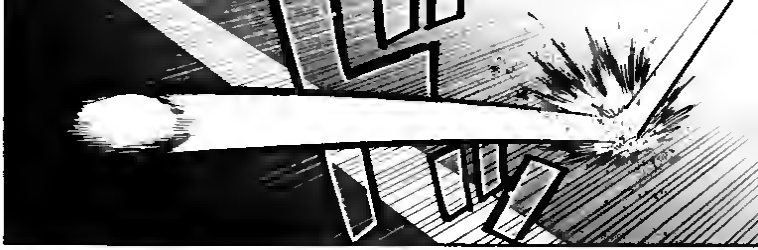
EI-CHAN'S REACTION TIME IS GETTING FASTER.

IT FEELS LIKE HE'S LEARNING MORE AND MORE ABOUT ME.
...AMAZING!

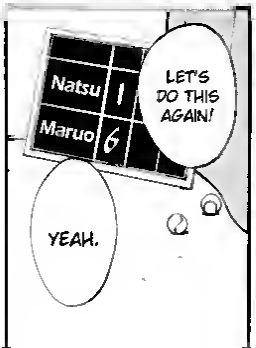


HA!

HO!
HA!
YES.
WELL, GUESS THIS IS HOW IT IS.

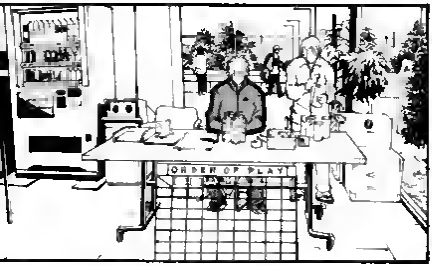


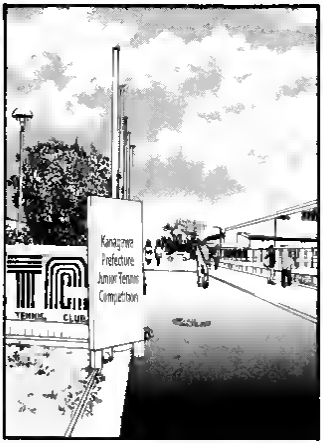
Stay

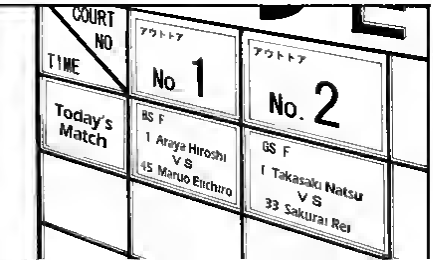

Natsu 1
Maruo 6
LET'S DO THIS AGAIN!
YEAH.

THAT'S IT FOR TODAY, BE PREPARED FOR TOMORROW!
OKAY! GOOD WORK, BOTH OF YOU!!

#114 ARAYA HIROSHI

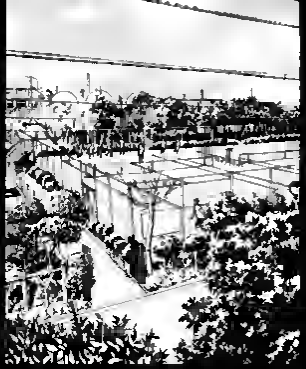

ORDER OF PLAY


Kanagawa Prefecture Junior Tennis Competition
TENNIS CLUB


COURT NO
TIME
Today's Match
アウトドア
No. 1
BS F
1 Araya Hiroshi
V S
45 Maruo Eiichiro
アウトドア
No. 2
GS F
1 Takasaki Natsu
V S
33 Sakurai Rei

タッ
タッ
タッ
タッ
タッ

IT'S ALL ABOUT HOW FAST YOU CAN REACH YOUR TOP SPEED!!
FASTER! FASTER!!



THAT'S THE FUTURE OF TENNIS!!
MOVE FASTER, HIT HARDER!!

WHAT'S WRONG, ARAYA!?
HEY!

THAT'S NOT YOUR JOB.
BUT... K.WAI IS...
DON'T STOP IN THE MIDDLE!!

THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN YOU DO FOR HIM RIGHT NOW.
EVERYONE HERE IS YOUR OPPONENT IN THIS RACE.
USE YOUR ENTIRE BODY TO HIT IT STRONGER!!
HA!
ORYAA!

OH... YOU HEARD?
ARE YOU REALLY GONNA QUIT?
SORRY ABOUT BEFORE.
HEY, ARAYA.
IT'S ABOUT TIME I DECIDE ON MY FUTURE, TOO.
NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, I CAN'T MOVE AS FAST OR HIT AS HARD AS YOU.
I DECIDED TO GIVE UP ON GOING PRO.
BUT I LIKE TENNIS, SO I'LL KEEP PLAYING.
SO...
YOU ARE OUR HOPE.
YOU SHOULD DO YOUR BEST.

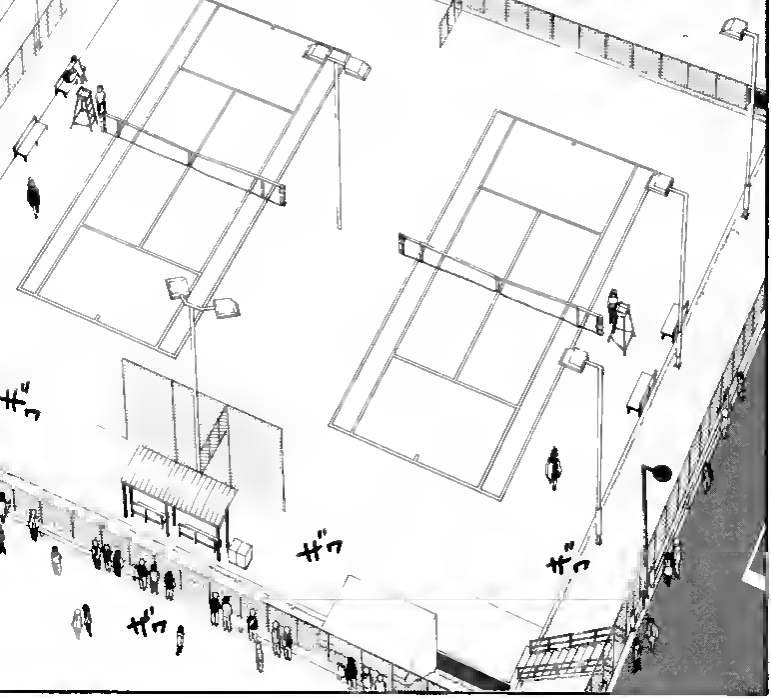
I UNDERSTOOD YOUR INTENTION OF BECOMING A PRO AFTER GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL.
YOU DID GREAT UNTIL NOW.
YEAH.
YOUR SCHEDULE TILL THEN DEPENDS ON YOUR PERFORMANCE AT THE ALL JAPAN JUNIOR
THERE ARE ONLY A HANDFUL WHO'VE MANAGED TO GET THIS FAR.
THEY'RE THE ONES WHO MANAGED TO GARNISH THEIR BLESSED TALENT WITH ENDLESS HARD WORK.
THE REASON OUR CLUB CAN WHOLEHEARTEDLY BACKUP YOUR FUTURE AS A PRO
IS BECAUSE YOU MANAGED TO SURVIVE TILL THE VERY END IN THIS EXTREMELY TOUGH PRO NURTURING PROGRAM

WE PLAN TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE BEST ENVIRONMENT THAT SUITS THOSE PEOPLE LIKE YOU. SO DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK US IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
I'VE BEEN AIMING FOR IT EVER SINCE I WAS A KID.
I HAD TO ABANDON MY FRIENDS,
AND THEN I FINALLY GRASPED THIS ROADWAY TO A PROFESSIONAL PLAYER.

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, FOR MY OWN SELF.
FOR THE SAKE OF MY CLUB; AND FOR THE SAKE OF MY FRIENDS.

I DEFINITELY WON'T LOSE TO YOU!!
AS SOMEONE WHO'S GOING TO BECOME A PRO,

MARUO EIICHIRO!!


ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ

LET'S DO A LAST MINUTE REVIEW.

I HAVE PLENTY OF DATA ON ARAYA-KUN.

1. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS SLOW START
2. FULLY EXHAUST THE TIME BETWEEN POINTS.
3. BE PERSISTENT.
4. SOMETIMES, IT'S IMPORTANT TO GIVE UP ESPECIALLY IN A CONTEST FOR POWER AND SPEED.
5. AVOID QUICK EXCHANGES, AND WAIT FOR...

HE'S IMPATIENT AND TENDS TO GET ANGRY EASILY, BUT HE MANAGED TO CONTROL HIS EMOTIONS BY THE END OF THE LAST MATCH.

...EFFECTIVE.
...THIS SIDE MOVES UP (FOR AN ...)
...HITS IN DURING NORMAL ...STANCES, TOO.

HE HAS A VERY POWERFUL COUNTER.

A LEFT HANDED BASE LINER WHO USES HIS POWER AND SPEED.

BUT HIS SPEED AND POWER HAVE GONE UP SIGNIFICANTLY.

HE WAS BASICALLY THE SAME WHEN I SAW HIM DURING NATIONAL SELECTIONS, TOO.

AS FOR THE SMALLER DETAILS, I'LL KNOW WHEN I PLAY HIM.

HAH!

*COUNTER SHOT
A SHOT THAT USES THE INCOMING SPEED TO HIT A CROSS OR A ...AND MAY FOR AN ACE.
<ARAYA-KUN'S CHARACTERISTIC>
—SIDE TO-SIDE COUNTER
DURING A FOREHAND, IF HIS LEFT SHOULDER DROPS, IT'S A CROSS
DURING A BACKHAND, IF HIS RIGHT SHOULDER DROPS, IT'S A CROSS
IT'S USUALLY A FAST BALL, AND HIGHLY EFFECTIVE.
WHEN THIS SIDE MOVES UP (FOR AN ATTACK),
HE ALSO HITS IN DURING NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, TOO.

DURING COUNTERS, HE HAS A TENDENCY TO LOWER HIS SHOULDERS ON A CROSS SHOT

Following

Cross

I'LL DEFINITELY RETURN IT TODAY.
MY DEBT FROM LAST TIME...
MEN'S SINGLE FINAL.
THEN, WE'LL BEGIN THE KANAGAWA PREFECTURE JUNIOR TENNIS COMPETITION'S
LET'S HAVE A GOOD MATCH.

YEAH.

ドクン
THIS SENSATION...
ドクン

え!

I HAVE TO MAKE SURE I'M NOT LOSING IN SPIRIT!!

IT'S THE SAME THING I FELT AGAINST MIYAGAWA-KUN...
A CHILLING, FEAR-LIKE SENSATION RUNNING THROUGH MY ENTIRE BODY.

THE REASON I DIDN'T FEEL SUCH A THING LAST YEAR...
IS PROBABLY BECAUSE I WASN'T THINKING ABOUT BEING A PRO YET.

GO FULL POWER FROM THE START...
EVEN MY IMPATIENCE CAN BE A WEAPON AS LONG AS I CONTROL IT.
THE ONE WHO THOUGHT ME THAT...

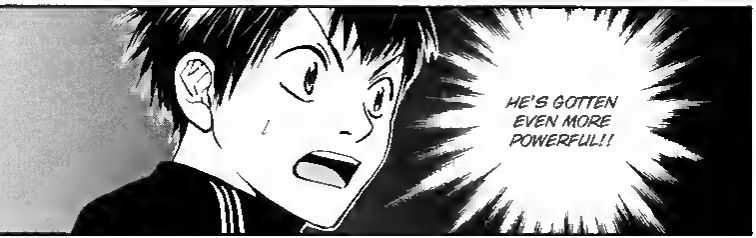
LAST YEAR, HE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME BEFORE I MANAGED TO GET IN THE GAME.
BUT I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.

THE BEST OF 3 SET MATCH.
ARAYA, SERVICE PLAY!
WAS DEFINITELY YOU...
HERE I GO!!

HA!
GREAT SERVE!
HA!
BUT HE RETURNED IT!

IT'S HEAVY!!

RGH ...!


HE'S GOTTEN EVEN MORE POWERFUL!!

...

BUT MARUO WAS RE-TURNING THEM PRETTY WELL, TOO
おぉっ
WOWW!! THOSE WERE SOME INCREDIBLE SHOTS!!

AL-
RIGHT
!!

HE'S GET-TING TOO INTO IT.
ALL HE DID WAS GET A POINT DURING HIS SERVE...
ヒソ
ヒソ
QUIET DOWN, WOULD YOU!?

ドキ
ドキ
ドキ

ARAYA-KUN...

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Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

RAWs: Share
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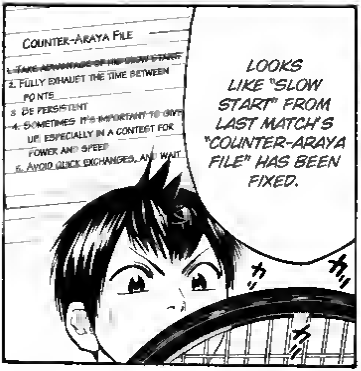
Proofreader: Galooza
Cleaner: Stark Shostakovich
Typesetter: Busaway
Q-Checker: Galooza

So loud!
ALRIIIGHT!!
LOOKS LIKE IT STARTED.
WOAH
ARAYA-SENPAI, NICE SHOT!!

#115 PROOF

15 - LOVE.


COUNTER-ARAYA FILE
1. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS SLOW START
2. FULLY EXHAUST THE TIME BETWEEN POINTS
3. BE PERSISTENT
4. SOMETIMES IT'S IMPORTANT TO GIVE UP, ESPECIALLY IN A CONTEST FOR POWER AND SPEED
5. AVOID QUICK EXCHANGES. AND WAIT.
LOOKS LIKE "SLOW START" FROM LAST MATCH'S "COUNTER-ARAYA FILE" HAS BEEN FIXED.
カ"
カ"

HIS SPEED, POWER, AND VOLUME OF HIS VOICE ARE ALL ABOVE LAST YEAR'S... AND IN SPITE OF THAT, IT SEEMS LIKE HE'S UNUSUALLY CALM.
カ"
カ"

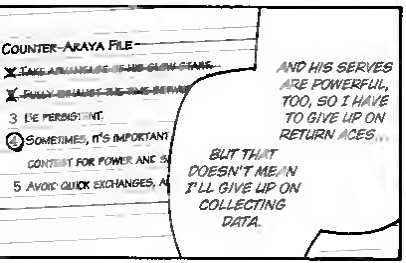
15 SECONDS.
MOREOVER..
カ"
カ"
カ"

COUNTER-ARAYA FILE
1. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS SLOW START.
2. FULLY REDUCE THE TIME BETWEEN EACH HIT.
3. BE PERSISTENT.
4. SOMETIMES, IT'S IMPORTANT TO GIVE UP, ESPECIALLY IN A CONTEST FOR POWER AND SPEED AGAINST ARAYA-KUN.
5. AVOID QUICK EXCHANGES, AND WAIT FOR
LAST YEAR, HE WAS ALL IRRITATED JUST FROM ME FIXING MY RACKET LIKE THIS,
BUT HE'S MAINTAINING CONCENTRATION BY TAKING DEEP BREATHS.
TRY TO CHECK OTHER PARTS, TOO, IF I CAN.
ESPECIALLY ON AN EARLY RETURN GAME WHERE I CAN AFFORD TO TAKE RISKS
COMPARE IT TO LAST YEAR'S DATA...
WATCH CAREFULLY, AND...
69%
28%

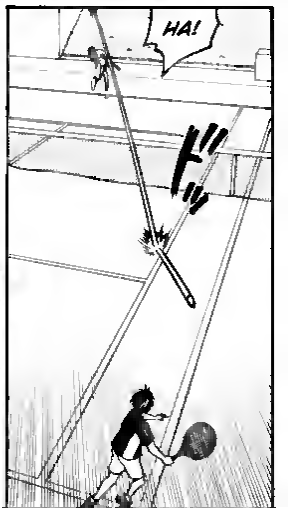
IT'S WIDE!!
くいっ
WHA-

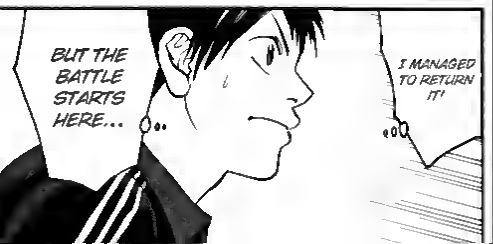
THAT'S RIGHT... ARAYA-KUN CAN USE HIS STRONG WRIST
TO CHANGE HIS AIM AT THE LAST MINUTE.

30 - LOVE.
YEAH !!


COUNTER-ARAYA FILE
3 BE PERSISTENT.
4 SOMETIMES, IT'S IMPORTANT
5 AVOID QUICK EXCHANGES, A
AND HIS SERVES ARE POWERFUL, TOO, SO I HAVE TO GIVE UP ON RETURN ACES...
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'LL GIVE UP ON COLLECTING DATA.

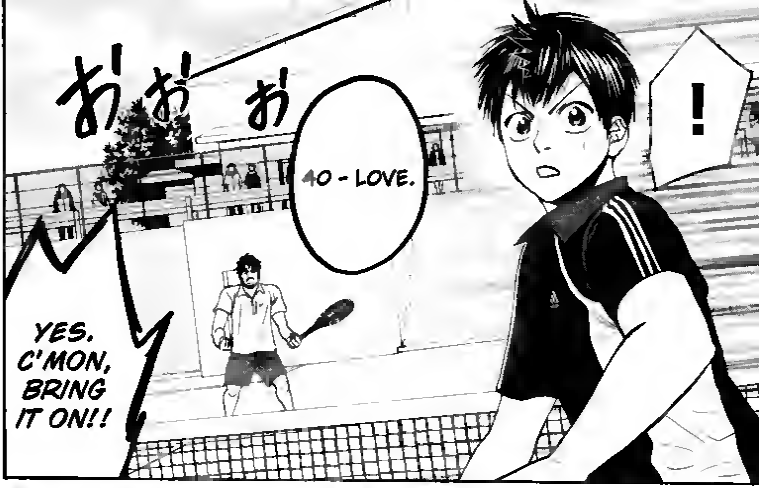
HA!

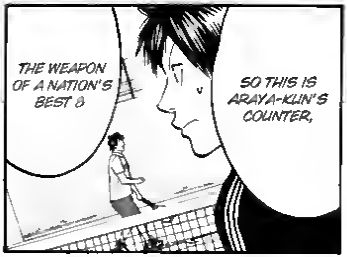

HA!

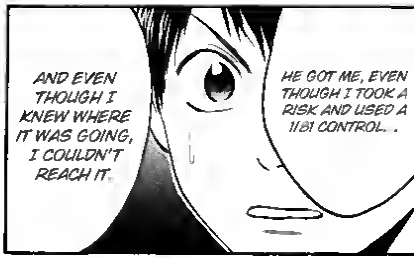

BUT THE BATTLE STARTS HERE...
I MANAGED TO RETURN IT!

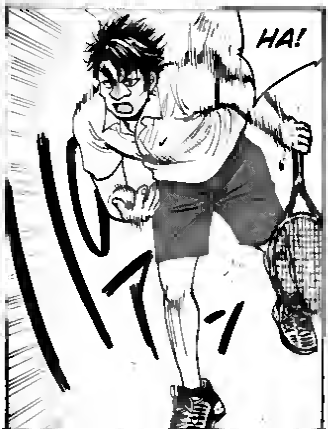
LAST YEAR, I HAD TO FORCEFULLY GAIN AN ADVANTAGE AT THE RETURN, BUT..
IT'S DIFFERENT NOW...
HERE, DON'T BE AFRAID, AND GO WITH.
1/31 CONTROL!!
GO IN!!
WOW!! THAT'S A PRETTY TIGHT SPOT!!
AND HE'S MOVING UP!!

HE'S FAST!!
HERE COMES THE COUNTER!!
HIS SHOULDER HASN'T DROPPED, SO THAT MEANS IT'LL BE DOWN THE LINE!!


おお お
40 - LOVE.
!
YES. C'MON, BRING IT ON!!


THE WEAPON OF A NATION'S BEST δ
SO THIS IS ARAYA-KUN'S COUNTER,


AND EVEN THOUGH I KNEW WHERE IT WAS GOING, I COULDN'T REACH IT.
HE GOT ME, EVEN THOUGH I TOOK A RISK AND USED A 118δ CONTROL. .

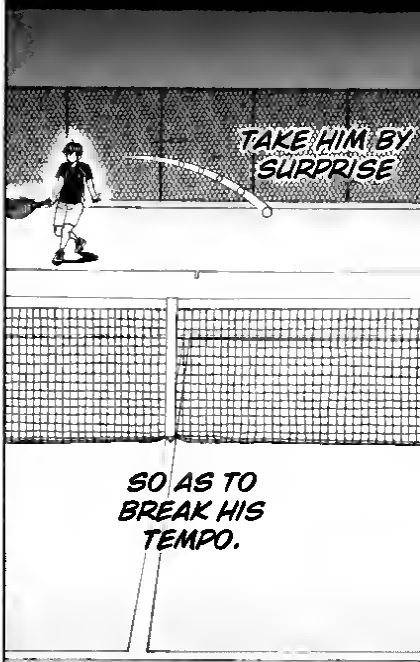

HA!

OR CREATING AN OPEN COURT WITH IT
SIMPLY HITTING A CONTROL SHOT DOESN'T WORK
I HAVE TO THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THROWING OFF HIS TIMING,

SLOW DOWN THE PACE WITH A SLICE.
I WONDER HOW DROPPING THE PACE AND DRAGGING IT OUT WILL WORK...
ALSO, ARAYA-KUN WASN'T GOOD AT PERSISTENT RALLIES BECAUSE HE WAS IMPATIENT.
HA!
HA!
RYA!
PIEK
HA!
HA!
NO GOOD... I CAN'T STEAL A POINT, EVEN IF I TRY TO DRAG IT OUT BY SLOWING THINGS DOWN.
THERE'S NO OTHER OPTION BUT TO ATTACK.
THEN... ONE MORE FROM THE "COUNTER-ARAYA FILE".

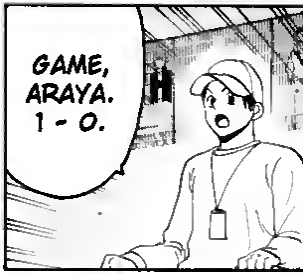
OH!?
SPLENDID DROP!

AND HE'S MOVING IN!!


TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE
SO AS TO BREAK HIS TEMPO.

BUT IT'S TOO LATE.
RGH-
ARAYA'S FAST, TOO!

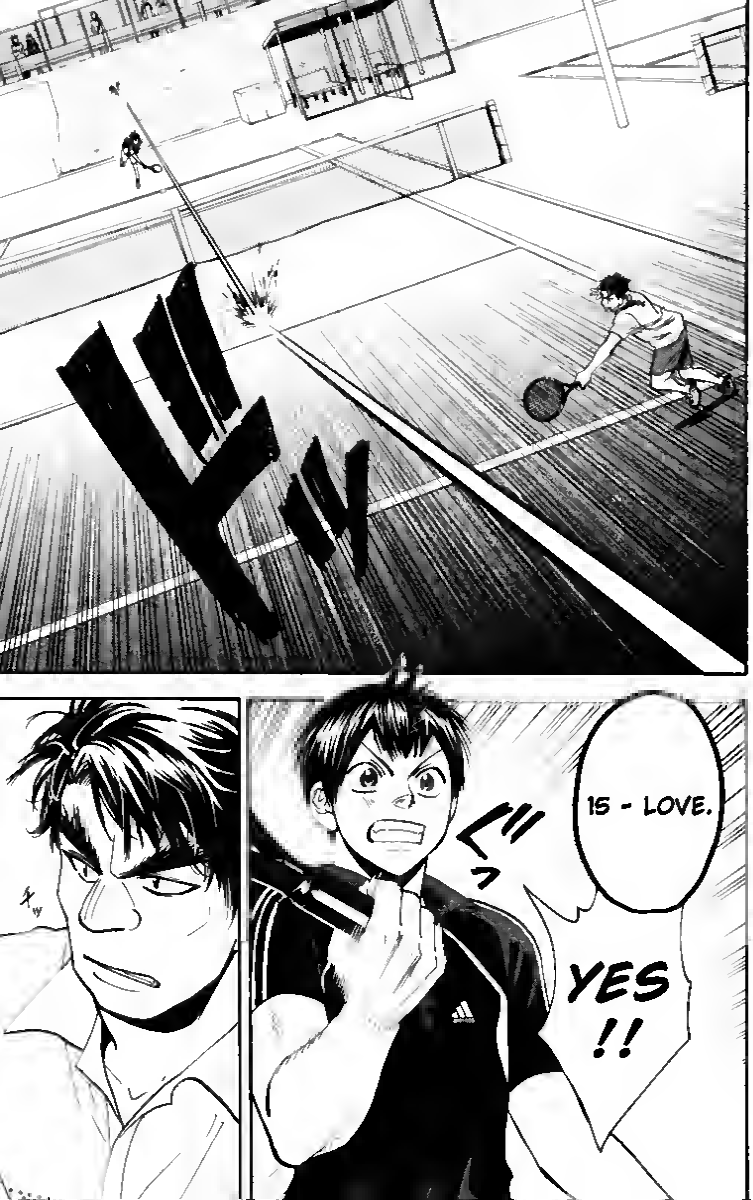
AL-
RIGHT
!!


GAME,
ARAYA.
1 - 0.

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THAT COULD BE PRETTY EF-FECTIVE IF I DO IT RIGHT.

WHAT LEGS .

Counter-Araya File
~~Take advantage of his slow start.~~
~~Fully exhaust the five-to-seven-point.~~
Be persistent.
Sometimes, it's important to give up, especially in a contest for power and speed against Araya-kun.
Avoid [illegible] changed, and wait for
I KNEW IT WOULDN'T BE LIKE LAST YEAR,
BUT I DID MANAGE TO GET A PRETTY GOOD IDEA
AS TO WHICH POINTS ARE STILL VALID AND WHICH AREN'T.
ONCE I MANAGE TO GET AS FAR AS I CAN,
I HAVE TO END UP SUCCEEDING ON ONE BREAK, TWO IF ALL POSSIBLE.
ON RETURN GAMES, I JUST HAVE TO KEEP ADVANCING LITTLE BY LITTLE, JUST LIKE THIS.
JUST SO I CAN USE MY RETURN GAMES FREELY LIKE THIS.
I'VE BEEN CRAFTING MY SERVES
TIME.


15 - LOVE.
YES !!

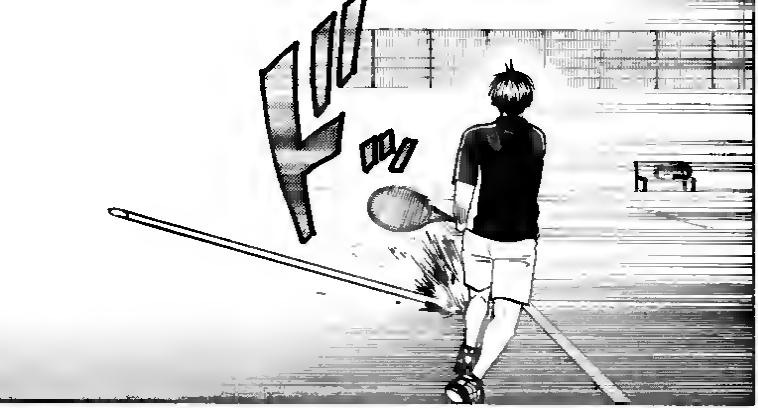
SO THIS IS THE SOURCE OF THE KEEPING POWER THAT DOMINATED MIYAGAWA.

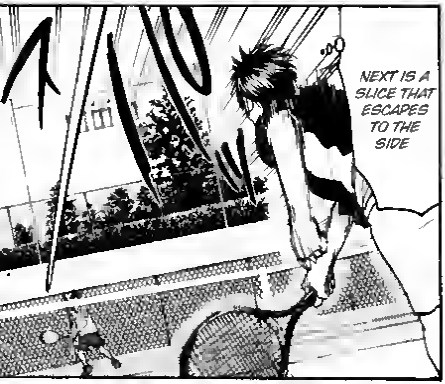
WOW...
AMAZING... ISN'T IT AS FAST AS ARAI'S!?
NO, IT MIGHT BE EVEN FASTER!!

NEXT IS A TOPSPIN TO THE CENTER.
HA!

THAT ALSO MEANS I'LL BE IN GOOD SHAPE AS LONG AS I DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...

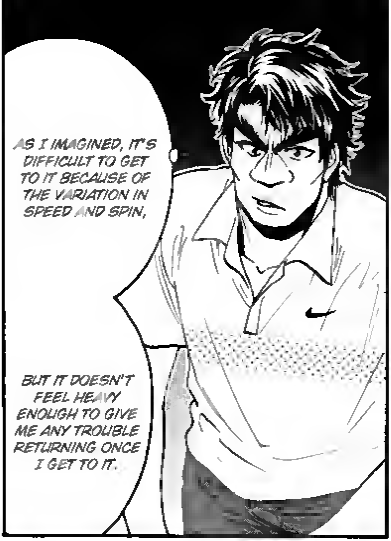
HAH!

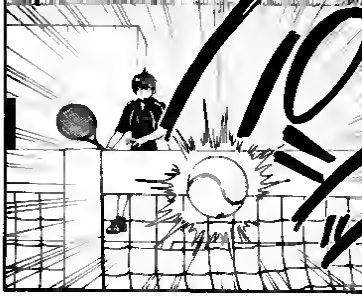



NEXT IS A SLICE THAT ESCAPES TO THE SIDE

HE STARTED RETURNING IT IN FULL SWING
OUT, 30 - LOVE.

ORA AA!


AS I IMAGINED, IT'S DIFFICULT TO GET TO IT BECAUSE OF THE VARIATION IN SPEED AND SPIN,
BUT IT DOESN'T FEEL HEAVY ENOUGH TO GIVE ME ANY TROUBLE RETURNING ONCE I GET TO IT.



HE TRIED TO RETURN IT WITH SO MUCH POWER, EVEN AS HE WAS GOING OFF BALANCE!!
40 - LOVE.

IS HE TRYING TO FORCE HIS WAY TO A BREAK IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MANNER THAN ME?
IS HE TRYING TO LEARN THE TIMING WITH HIS BODY BY HITTING ALL THE DIFFERENT SERVES WITH FULL POWER?

I REFUSE TO LET THAT HAPPEN!

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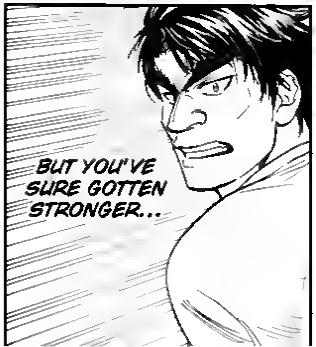
BASED ON THE THREE SERVES I HIT SO FAR...
THE ONE I HAVEN'T SHOWN YET...
A SLICE TO THE CENTER!!

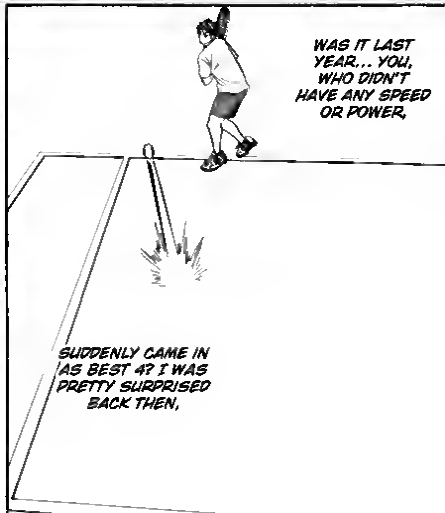
#116 DEFAULT

ORA AAA !!
ぎゅん
OUT!
GAME, MARUO. 1 – 1.

ALL RIGHT...!! FIRST, A KEEP!!
GRIP
OH~ MARUO'S PRETTY GOOD, AS EXPECTED!!
HE MANAGED TO GET A SOLID KEEP AGAINST ARAYA!!
THAT'S A PRETTY ANNOYING SERVE...
GEEZ... IT'S AS IF I'M PLAYING IN THE NATIONAL LEVEL.
THEN ONCE A DIFFERENT SERVE COMES, I HAVE TO LET MY BODY LEARN THE DIFFERENCE IN SPEED...
ANYWAY, IMAGINE RETURNING HIS FASTEST FLAT FIRST,
EVEN THOUGH ITS SPEED IS TOTALLY UNBELIEVABLE FOR HIS BODY, IT'S INCREDIBLY STABLE, TOO...
HE'S CAREFULLY VARYING THE SPEED FOR FLATS, SPINS, AND SLICES, WHILE PICKING A VARIETY OF ANGLES.

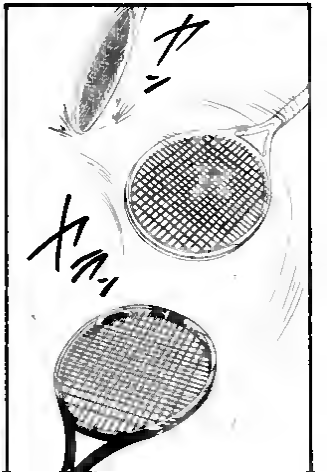
RGH~
HA!


BUT YOU'VE SURE GOTTEN STRONGER...


WAS IT LAST YEAR... YOU, WHO DIDN'T HAVE ANY SPEED OR POWER,
SUDDENLY CAME IN AS BEST 4? I WAS PRETTY SURPRISED BACK THEN,

SINCE THEN!!

15 - LOVE.
DAMN IT.


ガン
ガーン

HA!
I DON'T WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT'S POSSIBLE TO GET STRONG USING STRATEGIES AND SKILLS,
EVEN WITHOUT GREAT PHYSICAL ABILITY
BUT SINCE YOU'VE ADVANCED THIS FAR, IT MUST BE TRUE...
BUT IN TENNIS, IT'S ALSO TRUE THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ABILITY CONTINUES TO GROW
THE HIGHER YOU MOVE UP

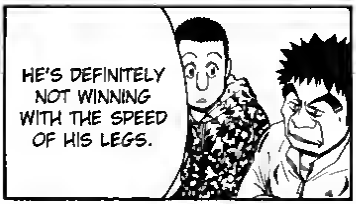
I'LL SHOW IT TO YOU TODAY, RIGHT HERE!!
THAT TRUTH. THIS GAP YOU ABSOLUTELY CANNOT OVERCOME...
GAME, ARAYA. 2 - 1.

HA!
ゼッ
ドク
!!
HA!
HIS RETURNS STARTED TO COME IN!!
BUT IF IT'S MY SERVICE GAME...
ドッ

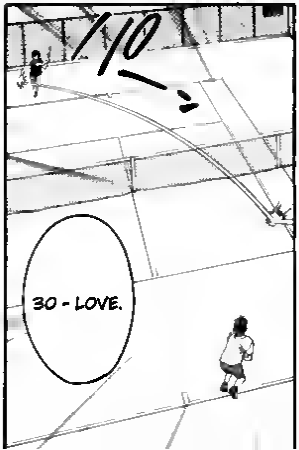
I CAN DO IT!!
HIS LEFT SHOULDER DROPPED!!
IT'S A COUNTER TO THE CROSS!!
HA!

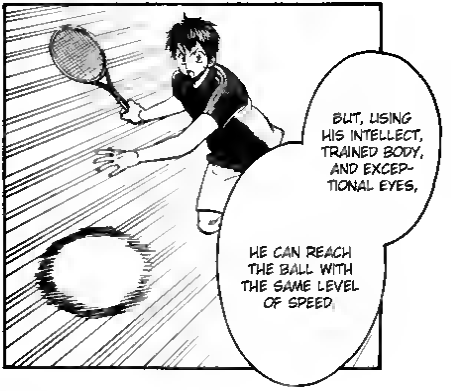
I CAN FIGHT HIM AT AN ADVANTAGE!!
IF IT'S MY SERVE GAME, I CAN RETURN EVEN HIS COUNTERS.

15 - LOVE.
YES!!


HE'S DEFINITELY NOT WINNING WITH THE SPEED OF HIS LEGS.

HOW CAN HE MATCH HIM WITHOUT FALLING BEHIND?
ANIKI IS ABLE TO KEEP UP WITH ARAYA'S SPEED AND POWER...
A-AMAZ-ING...


30 - LOVE.


BUT, USING HIS INTELLECT, TRAINED BODY, AND EXCEPTIONAL EYES,
HE CAN REACH THE BALL WITH THE SAME LEVEL OF SPEED.

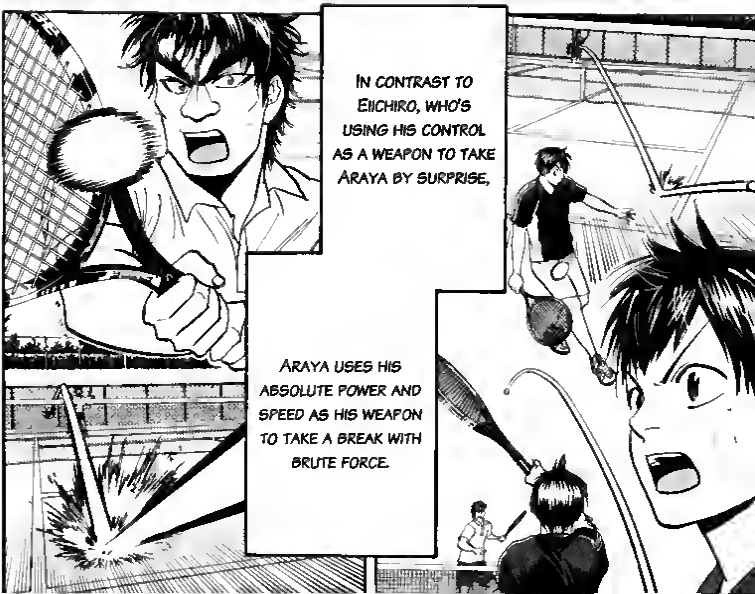
RGH~
IN LIKE MANNER, HIS POWER IS STILL NO MATCH AT HIS CURRENT STATE.
BUT BY USING HIS PRECISE CONTROL TO DELIVER THE BALL TO A TIGHT SPOT,
HE CAN CREATE THE SAME LEVEL OF FIREPOWER AS THOSE POWER SHOTS, ENABLING HIM TO EARN POINTS.
THIS IS DEFINITE PROOF THAT HE'S BEEN ABLE TO GET SIGNIFICANTLY CLOSER TO THE ULTIMATE IDEAL HE ESTABLISHED IN THE VERY BEGINNING:
"IF YOU CAN GET TO EVERY BALL AND CONTROL IT WITH EXACT PRECISION, THEORETICALLY, YOU CAN NEVER LOSE."

HA!

THAT MEANS... HE HAS A CHANCE TO WIN, RIGHT?
YEAH. THE REAL BATTLE STARTS FROM HERE...
GAME, MARUO. 2 - 2.
YEAH!!

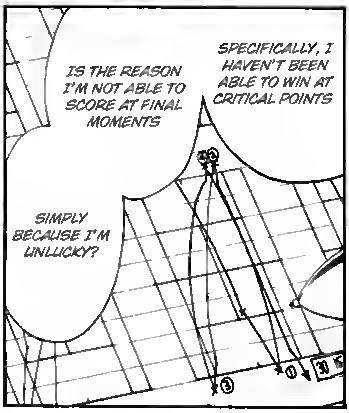
IT'S ALL ABOUT WHO'S GOING TO BREAK FIRST.

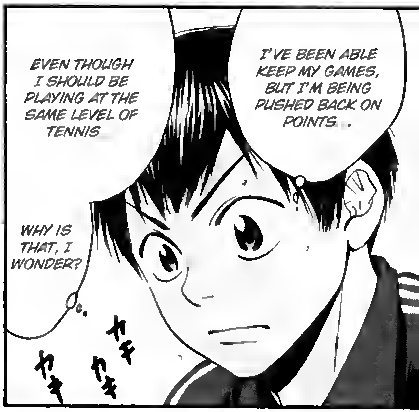
The match has consisted of interchanging waves of offense and defense, where both players are seeking to break.


In contrast to Eiichiro, who's using his control as a weapon to take Araya by surprise,
Araya uses his absolute power and speed as his weapon to take a break with brute force.

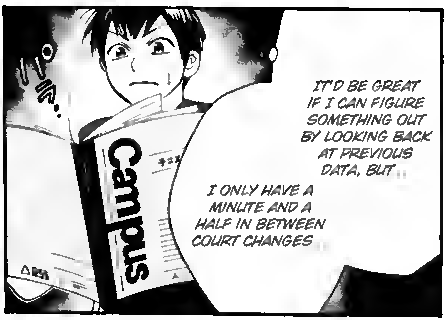
YEEE EEEE EEEE EES !!
In the midst of ongoing keeps where both players are seeking a breakthrough...
...
Eiichiro started to experience an odd, unnerving feeling at the end of 7th game.
1 2 3
Araya 4
Maruo 3

ヤキヤキヤキ


SPECIFICALLY, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO WIN AT CRITICAL POINTS
IS THE REASON I'M NOT ABLE TO SCORE AT FINAL MOMENTS
SIMPLY BECAUSE I'M UNLUCKY?


I'VE BEEN ABLE KEEP MY GAMES, BUT I'M BEING PUSHED BACK ON POINTS..
EVEN THOUGH I SHOULD BE PLAYING AT THE SAME LEVEL OF TENNIS
WHY IS THAT, I WONDER?
ヤキヤキヤキ

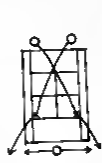
THAT'S RIGHT...


IT'D BE GREAT IF I CAN FIGURE SOMETHING OUT BY LOOKING BACK AT PREVIOUS DATA, BUT...
I ONLY HAVE A MINUTE AND A HALF IN BETWEEN COURT CHANGES...
Canvas

★ CROSS IS THE KEY INITIATOR OF HIS ATTACKS.
ARAYA-KUN WILL DEFINITELY USE A CROSS TO INITIATE HIS ATTACKS IN ORDER TO PUSH HIS OPPONENTS AWAY FROM THE COURT

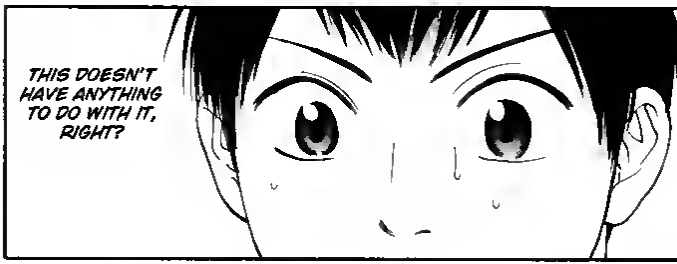
ARAYA-KUN'S HABIT FROM LAST YEAR, "LEANING FORWARD WHEN HITTING A CROSS"...

HAS BEEN FIXED...



HIS BODY LEANS FORWARD RIGHT BEFORE THE IMPACT

★ CHARACTERISTICS OF ARAYA-KUN'S STROKES.
. HE AIMS FOR EVEN THE SLIGHTEST SPACE OF OPEN COURT
. AT THE SAME TIME, HE OFTEN FORMS SIMPLE PATTERNS OF INTERCHANGING LEFT AND RIGHT



SO I'M JUST WONDERING IF HE FULLY UNDER-STANDS WHAT IT MEANS...
NAH... I JUST REMEMBERED HOW SHORT HIS TENNIS HISTORY IS...
IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
HMM...
FOR ARAYA TO BE LEFT-HANDED.

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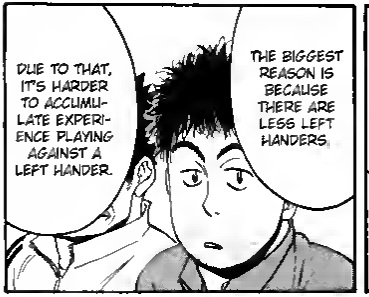
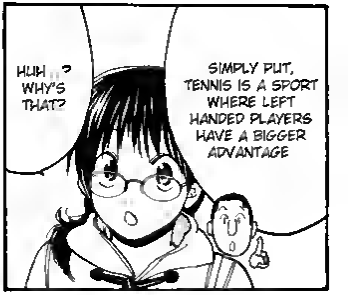
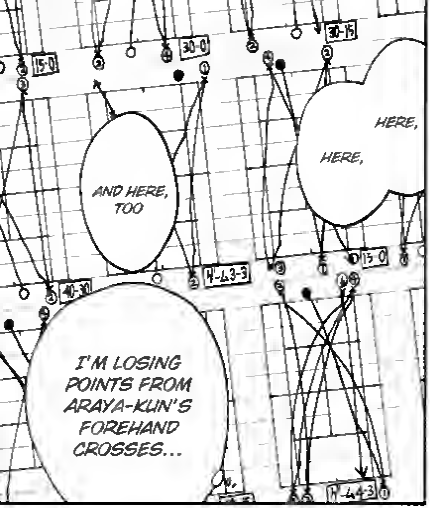

DUE TO THAT, IT'S HARDER TO ACCUMULATE EXPERIENCE PLAYING AGAINST A LEFT HANDER.
THE BIGGEST REASON IS BECAUSE THERE ARE LESS LEFT HANDERS.

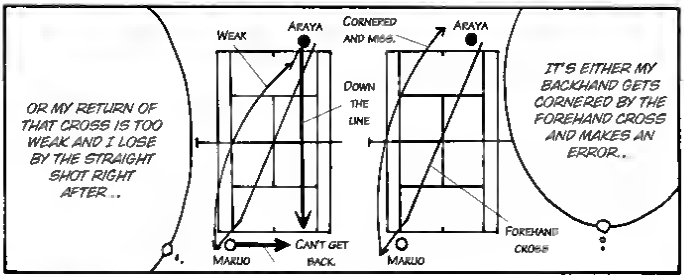


#117 IMPRINTING

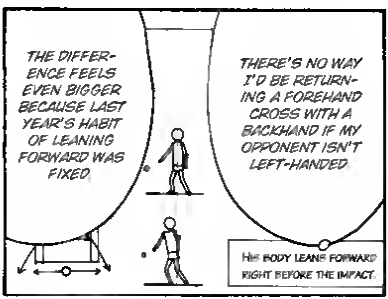
I SEE.
THERE WERE ALREADY TOO MANY OTHER FACTORS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
AND THERE WAS AN INCREDIBLE GAP IN SKILL LAST YEAR, RIGHT?
THEN HE MUST'VE LOST BEFORE HE COULD EVEN NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE.
AND HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT BACK THEN.
BUT ANIKI ALREADY PLAYED AGAINST ARAYA LAST YEAR,
ESPECIALLY AS THE MATCH GETS LONGER.
NOW THAT THEIR SKILLS ARE ON PAR, ANY SMALL DIFFERENCES CAN INFLUENCE THE MATCH DRASTICALLY.
BUT NOW, IT'S DIFFERENT.
カキ
カキカキ
カキ
THIS ONE COULD BE A BIT...
WELL, HE HAS HIS ANALYZING SKILLS, SO I'M SURE HE'LL BE ABLE TO NOTICE IT, BUT...


I'M LOSING POINTS FROM ARAYA-KUN'S FOREHAND CROSSES...
AND HERE, TOO
HERE, HERE,

W..IT A SEC...


OR MY RETURN OF THAT CROSS IS TOO WEAK AND I LOSE BY THE STRAIGHT SHOT RIGHT AFTER..
WEAK
ARAYA
MARUO
CAN'T GET BACK.
CORNERED AND MISS.
ARAYA
DOWN THE LINE
MARUO
FOREHAND CROSS
IT'S EITHER MY BACKHAND GETS CORNERED BY THE FOREHAND CROSS AND MAKES AN ERROR..

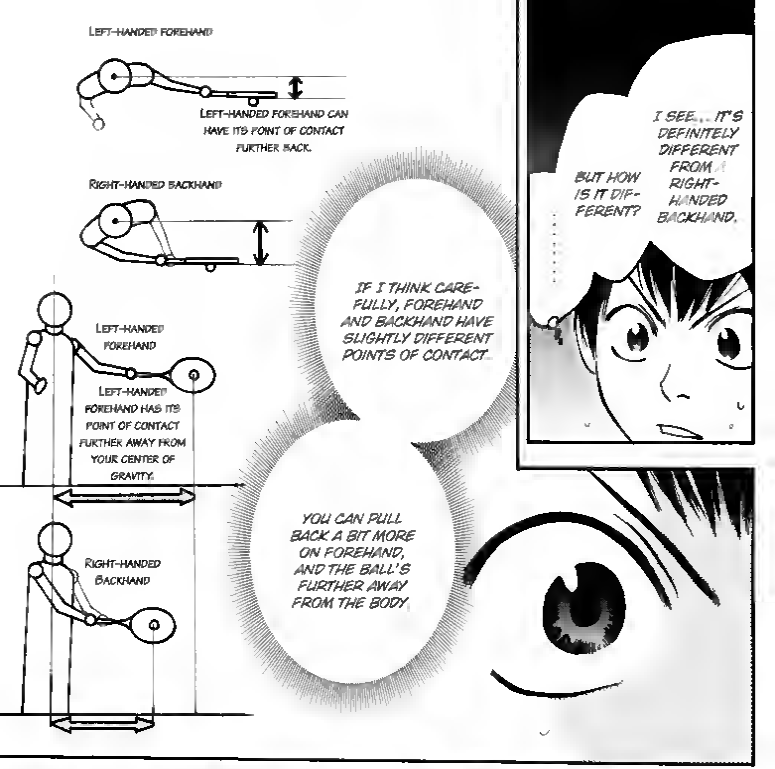
IF THAT'S THE CASE... THEN THIS UNEASINESS IS COMING FROM THE FACT THAT ARAYA-KUN IS LEFT-HANDED.

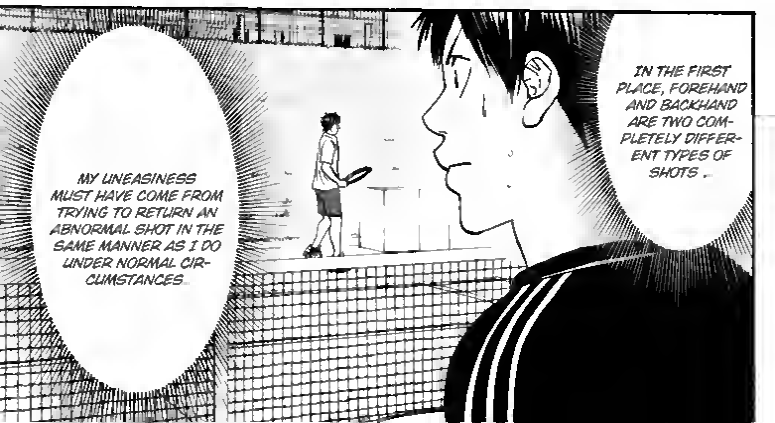

THE DIFFERENCE FEELS EVEN BIGGER BECAUSE LAST YEAR'S HABIT OF LEANING FORWARD WAS FIXED.
THERE'S NO WAY I'D BE RETURNING A FOREHAND CROSS WITH A BACKHAND IF MY OPPONENT ISN'T LEFT-HANDED.
HIS BODY LEANS FORWARD RIGHT BEFORE THE IMPACT.

TIME!
ビクッ
LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND
RIGHT-HANDED BACKHAND
OUT IS A LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND REALLY THAT DIFFERENT FROM A RIGHT-HANDED BACKHAND?
I FEEL LIKE THE TRAJECTORY ISN'T THAT DIFFERENT...
OR IS THERE SOMETHING SPECIAL IN ARAYA-KUN'S FOREHAND?
SINCE I WASN'T ABLE TO FIND A CLEAR ANSWER,
I HAVE TO SEEK IT DURING THE MATCH
ANYWAY, REMEMBER TO BE CAREFUL OF THE FOREHAND CROSS...

HA!
HA!
RA!
I'LL DO MY BEST TO DISTINGUISH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND.
WITHIN THIS SERVE GAME WHERE I HAVE THE UPPER HAND.

ORA
AA!
RGH~
LOVE - 15.


LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND
LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND CAN HAVE ITS POINT OF CONTACT FURTHER BACK.
RIGHT-HANDED BACKHAND
LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND
LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND HAS ITS POINT OF CONTACT FURTHER AWAY FROM YOUR CENTER OF GRAVITY.
RIGHT-HANDED BACKHAND
IF I THINK CAREFULLY, FOREHAND AND BACKHAND HAVE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT POINTS OF CONTACT.
YOU CAN PULL BACK A BIT MORE ON FOREHAND, AND THE BALL'S FURTHER AWAY FROM THE BODY.
I SEE... IT'S DEFINITELY DIFFERENT FROM RIGHT-HANDED BACKHAND.
BUT HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?

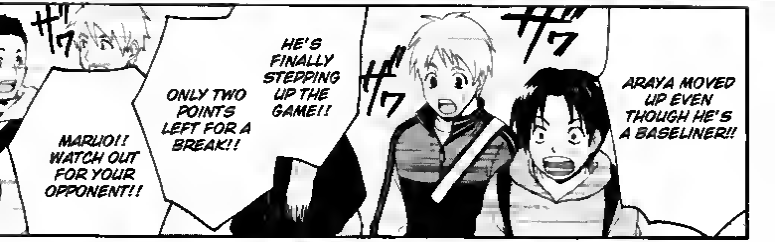

IN THE FIRST PLACE, FOREHAND AND BACKHAND ARE TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT TYPES OF SHOTS.
MY UNEASINESS MUST HAVE COME FROM TRYING TO RETURN AN ABNORMAL SHOT IN THE SAME MANNER AS I DO UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

HA!
ALRIGHT, THEN...
FIFTEEN SECONDS.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, WHAT SHOULD I DO...
TO GET USED TO LEFT-HANDED'S SHOTS AS QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY AS POSSIBLE...
LOOK AT ARAYA-KUN'S MOVEMENTS CAREFULLY, AND...

IMAGINE A MIRRORED SITUATION RIGHT BEFORE HE HITS...
FOLLOW THE BALL'S SPIN AND TRAJECTORY CAREFULLY...
AH...
HA!

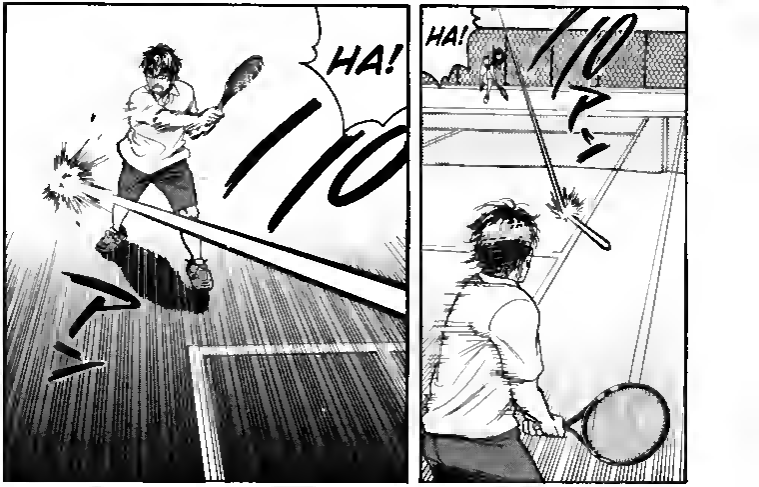
ARAYA'S ON THE NET...!!
RGH~
LOVE - 30.

ALLRIIIIIIGHT!!


MARUO!! WATCH OUT FOR YOUR OPPONENT!!
ONLY TWO POINTS LEFT FOR A BREAK!!
HE'S FINALLY STEPPING UP THE GAME!!
ARAYA MOVED UP EVEN THOUGH HE'S A BASELINER!!

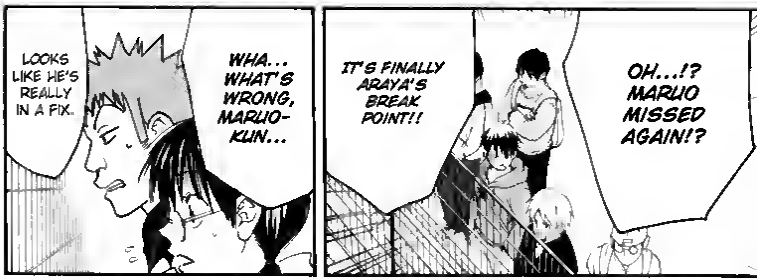
SHOOT... THIS JUST LIMITS MY VIEW AND I CAN'T TRACK MY OPPONENT'S MOVEMENT.

I HAVE TO KEEP MY FIELD OF VIEW WIDE...
THAT'S RIGHT... ESPECIALLY AT TIMES LIKE THIS..
PAY ATTENTION TO THE ENTIRE COURT AND ARAYA-KUN.
TRY NOT TO THINK TOO MUCH..


HA!
HA!

LET MY BODY REACT TO IT INSTINCTIVELY...
DON'T BE BOGGLED BY LEFT-HANDED, RIGHT-HANDED, AND...
AND HIT!!
HA!

OUT, LOVE - 40.


LOOKS LIKE HE'S REALLY IN A FIX.
WHA... WHAT'S WRONG, MARUO-KUN...
IT'S FINALLY ARAYA'S BREAK POINT!!
OH...!? MARUO MISSED AGAIN!?

TRYING TO RELY ON YOUR INTUITION LIKE THAT IS A NO...
...

JUST LIKE YOU, YOUR INTUITION DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT LEFT-HANDERS
IF YOU FORCE YOUR WAY WITH PURE INSTINCTS AND MAKE AN ERROR..
IT CAN BITE BACK AT YOU BY CREATING A SENSE OF FEAR.
IT GETS QUITE TROUBLESOME ONCE THAT HAPPENS
ORAA!
HA!

ドン

イイ
OUT!
GAME, ARAYA. COUNT 5 - 3. ARAYA LEAD.

BRING IT ONNN!!
ARAYA-SENPAI, LET'S TAKE THE NEXT SET, TOO!!
ARAYA'S BREAK!!
MARUO!! THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU, GET BACK IN THE GAME!!
THE STALE-MATE IS FINALLY BROKEN!!

TH-THAT WAS STRANGE...
IT'S NOT JUST THAT MY OPPONENT IS LEFT-HANDED..
MY SHOTS IN GENERAL HAVE DEFINITELY GONE WEIRD.

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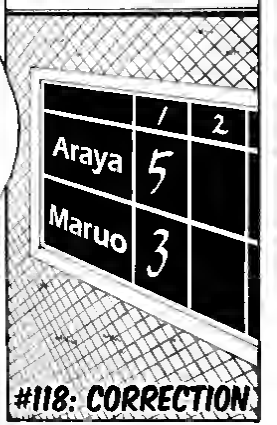
RAWs: Share
Translator: Auggie
Proofreader: Galooza
Cleaner: Stark Shostakovich
Typesetter: Busaway
Q-Checker: Galooza

RECRUITMENT

WE ARE IN DIRE NEED OF CLEANERS
(MOSTLY REDRAWERS) FOR THIS SERIES:

DIAMOND NO ACE

APPLY AT FORUM.IMANGASCANS.ORG
OR IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, PLEASE JOIN AT
IRCHIGHWAY #IMANGASCANS

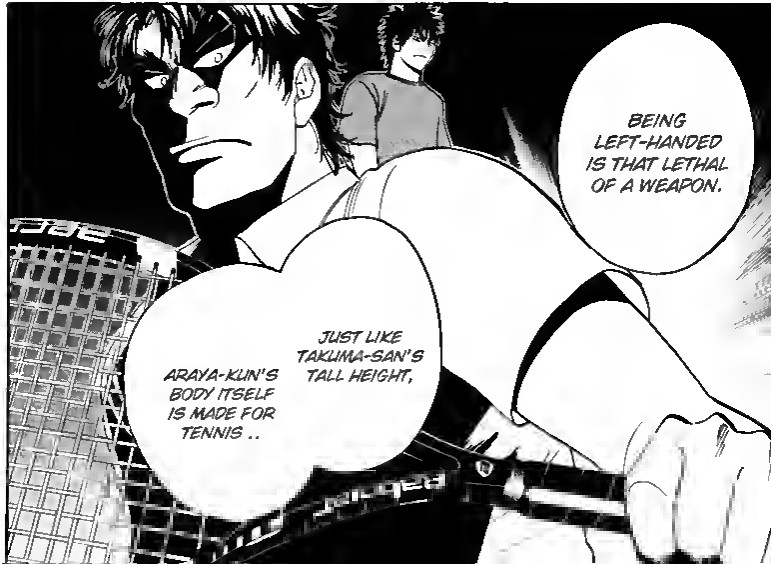


#118: CORRECTION

BUT EVEN WHEN I TRIED NOT TO THINK, AND LEFT EVERYTHING TO INSTINCT,
IT DIDN'T WORK OUT WELL...

IF I THINK TOO MUCH ON CORRECTING FOR THE DIFFERENCE,
MY FIELD OF VISION GETS TOO NARROW...

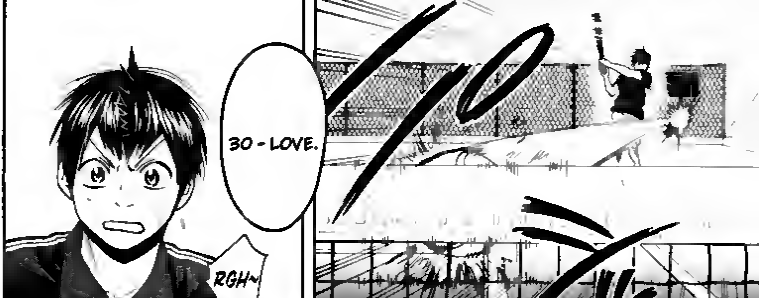
THERE'S NO WAY MY INTUITION WOULD KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN MY CONSCIOUSNESS HAS NO IDEA
THE TIMES WHEN INSTINCTIVE PLAYS WORKED WELL WERE WHEN I HAD PLENTY OF EXPERIENCE AND DATA.
I SEE
OF COURSE THAT'S THE CASE


BEING LEFT-HANDED IS THAT LETHAL OF A WEAPON.
JUST LIKE TAKUMA-SAN'S TALL HEIGHT,
ARAYA-KUN'S BODY ITSELF IS MADE FOR TENNIS ..

ANYWAY, THIS EERINESS AND MY BROKEN BACKHAND...
I'VE GOT TO DO SOME-THING ABOUT THESE SOON...

うおお
15 - LOVE.
HE'S CHARGING HEAD ON TO TAKE THE SET!!
A-AN ACE RIGHT HERE!!

SERVES ARE WHERE YOU SEE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO
I SEE... SO FAR, I'VE BEEN CONSIDERING HIS SERVES A MERE OPPOSITE OF RIGHT-HANDED SERVES, BUT..
A WIDE SLICE!!
HA!

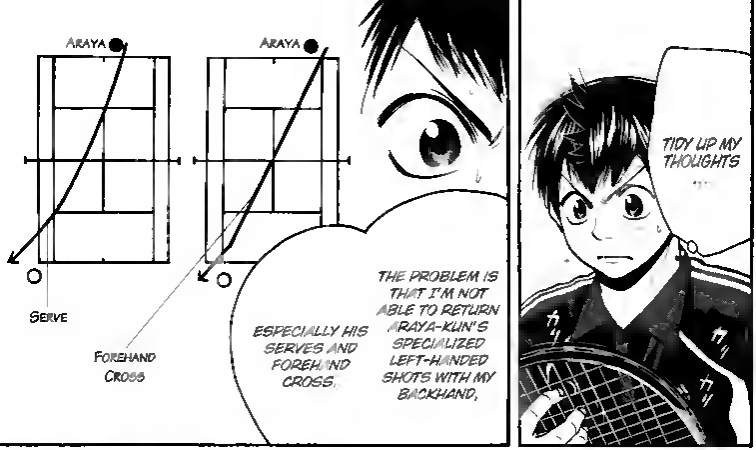


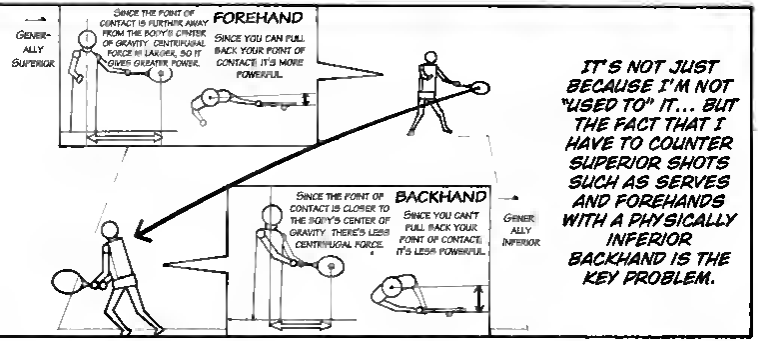
ESCAPES TO THE OUTSIDE MORE THAN A RIGHT-HANDED SERVE.
THE SPIN PUT ON THE BALL IS OPPOSITE THAT OF ONE BY A RIGHT-HANDER.
AD COURT
WIDE SLICE
BACKHAND DOESN'T HAVE AS WIDE OF A RANGE AS A FOREHAND.
FORE HAND
BACK HAND
ESPECIALLY WITH A WIDE SLICE ON AN AD COURT*, THE BALL BOUNCES OUT FROM THE COURT AND I HAVE TO HIT IT WITH MY BACKHAND.

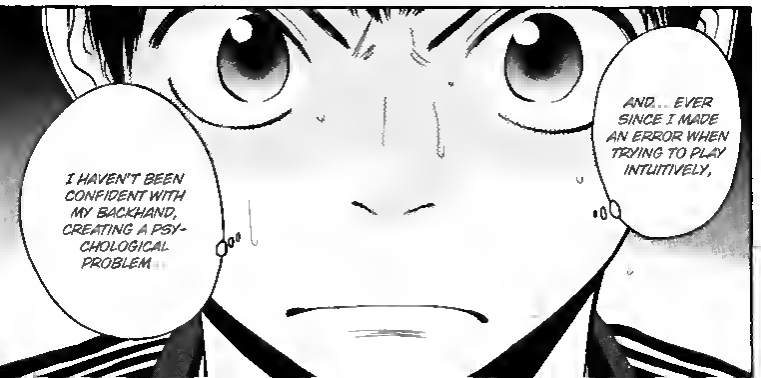
*NOTE: Ad Court: Side of the court on the left when facing the net.

TCH.
HA!
BACKHAND AGAIN.
HA!

HE'S TOTALLY TARGETING IT...
OUT.
40 - LOVE.
ARAYA-SAN, LET'S FINISH WITH THIS!!
MARUO-KUN, DO YOUR BEST!!
HERE IT IS!! ARAYA'S SET POINT!!
IT FEELS LIKE THE TIDE WILL COMPLETELY GO TO HIM IF I LOSE THIS ONE.
CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN!!

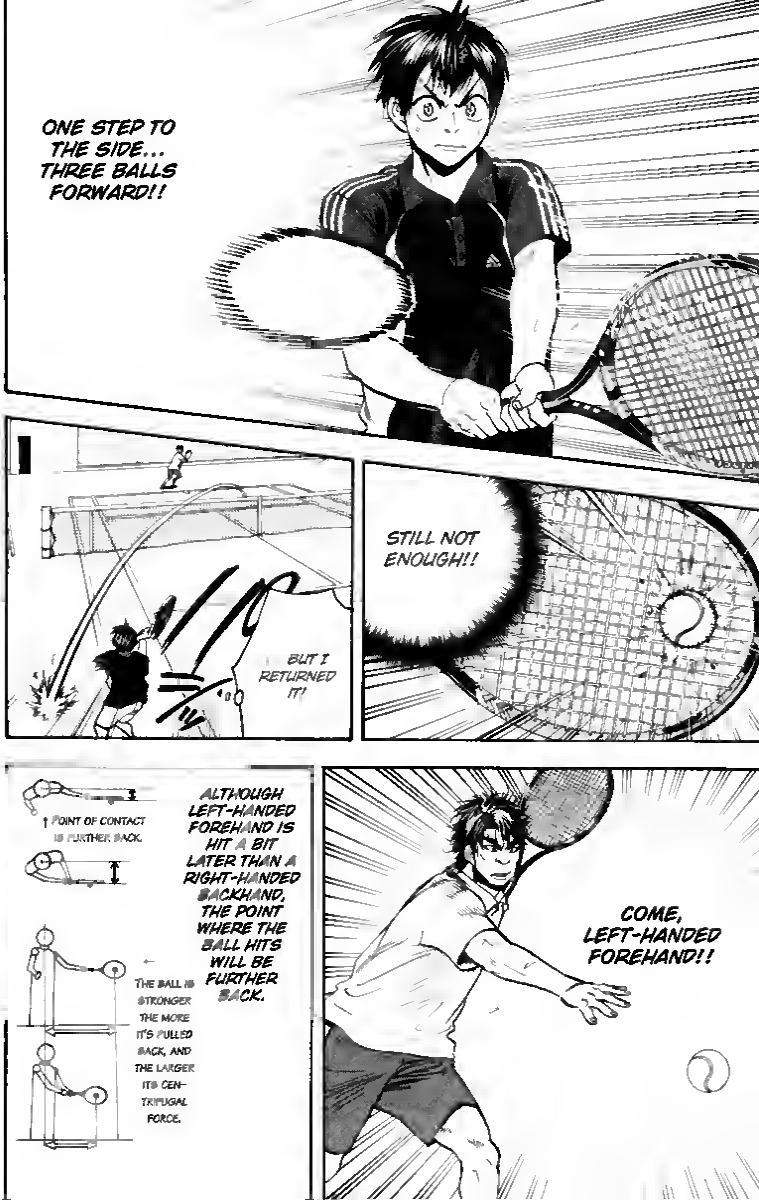

ARAYA
ARAYA
SERVE
FOREHAND CROSS
ESPECIALLY HIS SERVES AND FOREHAND CROSS.
THE PROBLEM IS THAT I'M NOT ABLE TO RETURN ARAYA-KUN'S SPECIALIZED LEFT-HANDED SHOTS WITH MY BACKHAND,
TIDY UP MY THOUGHTS...


GENERALLY SUPERIOR
SINCE THE POINT OF CONTACT IS FURTHER AWAY FROM THE BODY'S CENTER OF GRAVITY, CENTRIFUGAL FORCE IS LARGER, SO IT GIVES GREATER POWER.
FOREHAND
SINCE YOU CAN PULL BACK YOUR POINT OF CONTACT, IT'S MORE POWERFUL.
SINCE THE POINT OF CONTACT IS CLOSER TO THE BODY'S CENTER OF GRAVITY, THERE'S LESS CENTRIFUGAL FORCE.
BACKHAND
SINCE YOU CAN'T PULL BACK YOUR POINT OF CONTACT, IT'S LESS POWERFUL.
GENERALLY INFERIOR
IT'S NOT JUST BECAUSE I'M NOT "USED TO" IT... BUT THE FACT THAT I HAVE TO COUNTER SUPERIOR SHOTS SUCH AS SERVES AND FOREHANDS WITH A PHYSICALLY INFERIOR BACKHAND IS THE KEY PROBLEM.


I HAVEN'T BEEN CONFIDENT WITH MY BACKHAND, CREATING A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM...
AND... EVER SINCE I MADE AN ERROR WHEN TRYING TO PLAY INTUITIVELY,

A PHYSICAL AND A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM. CAN I SOLVE BOTH AT THE SAME TIME?
IF NOT, THEN WHICH SHOULD I PRIORITIZE MORE?
I'VE GOT TO SOLVE THEM AS EFFICIENTLY AS POSSIBLE.
SCRITCH
SCRITCH
IT'S PRETTY MUCH A GAMBLE...
SCRITCH
SCRITCH
SCRITCH
15 SECONDS!
THINK!
THAT'S RIGHT.. I'M NOT THE TYPE THAT CAN BELIEVE IN A BASELESS CONFIDENCE FROM THE START.
IF I DON'T USE MY HEAD TO SOLVE THE PHYSICAL PROBLEM FIRST, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN REGAIN ANY CONFIDENCE

HE'LL DEFINITELY SERVE TO MY BACKHAND SIDE AGAIN!!
ANALYZE ITS DIFFERENCE FROM A RIGHT-HANDED SERVE WITH MY HEAD AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE...
THEN LET MY BODY GET USED TO IT AS I CAREFULLY CORRECT THE PREDICTED TRAJECTORY!!
HOW SHARP DO LEFT-HANDED SERVES CUT TOWARDS THE BACKHAND SIDE?
FIRST, IMAGINE IT TO BE ONE STEP TO THE SIDE AND THREE BALLS' DISTANCE FORWARD...
HERE COMES THE WIDE SLICE!!

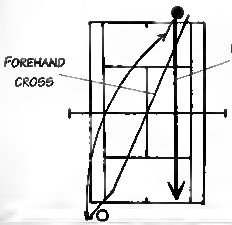

ONE STEP TO THE SIDE... THREE BALLS FORWARD!!
BUT I RETURNED IT!
STILL NOT ENOUGH!!
↑ POINT OF CONTACT IS FURTHER BACK.
ALTHOUGH LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND IS HIT A BIT LATER THAN A RIGHT-HANDED BACKHAND, THE POINT WHERE THE BALL HITS WILL BE FURTHER BACK.
← THE BALL IS STRONGER THE MORE IT'S PULLED BACK, AND THE LARGER ITS CENTRIFUGAL FORCE.
COME, LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND!!

IMAGINE HITTING THE BALL SLIGHTLY EARLY, AND...
PREPARE TO SWING A TAD FASTER.
SINCE IT'LL GET TO ME A BIT FASTER THAN I'D EXPECT,
A STEP FASTER!!
EVEN THOUGH I WAS AIMING FOR THE RIGHT CORNER, IT WENT TO THE CENTER
I'M STILL SWINGING A BIT LATE...

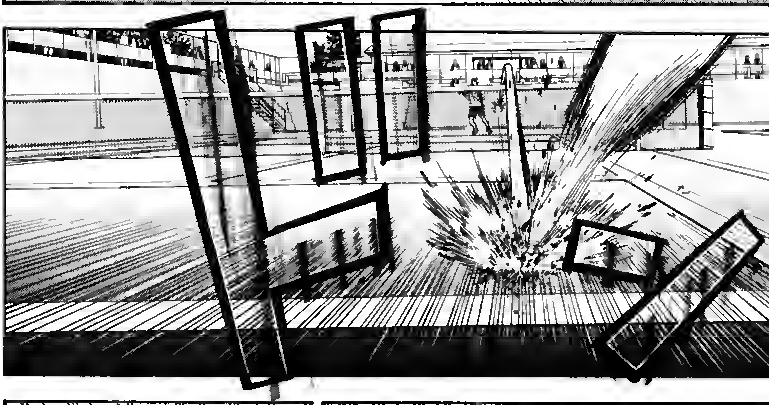
ORAA!
I DON'T FEEL MUCH UNEASINESS RETURNING A LEFT-HANDED BACKHAND
AS EXPECTED, THE PROBLEM LIES WITH A LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND,
WHEN I'M HITTING IT WITH MY BACKHAND...
HA!
HERE!!

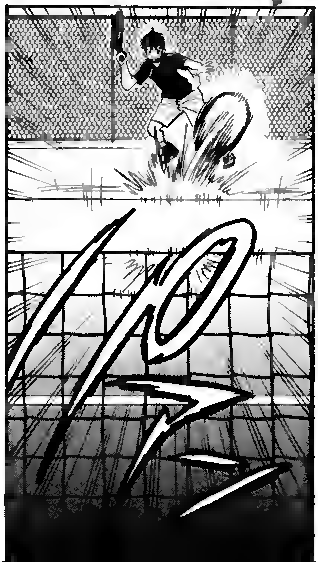
HA!
FASTER!!
IT WENT IN...!!
AH...
THIS PATTERN IS...

A FOREHAND CROSS FOLLOWED BY DOWN THE LINE!!



THE ONE WHERE I KEEP LOSING BY AN ACE.





FIRST SET...
WON BY ARAYA. COUNT: 6 - 3.
OH~!! AS EXPECTED, ARAYA TAKES THE FIRST SET!!

EVEN THOUGH WE THOUGHT MARUO WAS DOING PRETTY WELL...
ARIYA'S CERTAINLY A STEP ABOVE HIM.
HE GOT ME...
...BUT, I MIGHT STILL BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS.

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Baby Steps

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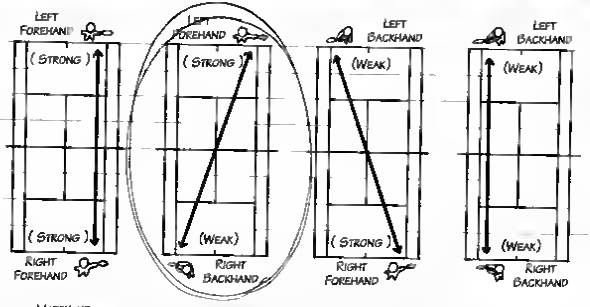
RAWs: Share
Translator: Auggie
Proofreader: Galooza
Cleaner: Stark Shostakovich
Typesetter: Busaway
Q-Checker: Galooza

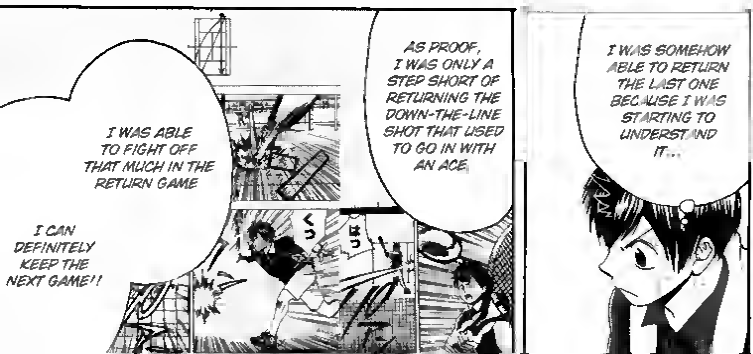
#119: ADVANCE

TAKASAKI NATSU'S SUPER STRONG!!
AND SO CUTE!!

1 2 3
Araya 6
Maruo 3
LOOKS LIKE THE FIRST SEED IS WINNING ON THAT SIDE ALSO.
AH.. THE FIRST SET'S OVER ON THE MEN'S SIDE, TOO.
SHE'S TOP 4 IN THE NATION, AND TOTALLY UNMATCHED IN THIS TOURNAMENT.

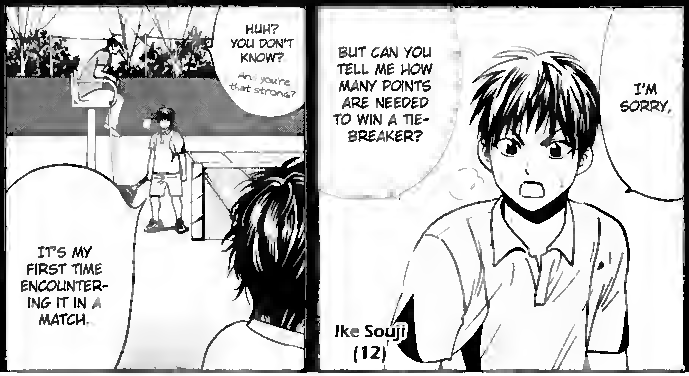
< THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEFT-HANDED AND RIGHT-HANDED WHEN A FOREHAND IS (STRONG) AND A BACKHAND IS (WEAK) >

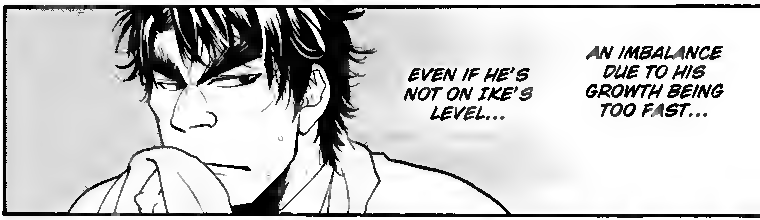



I WAS ABLE TO FIGHT OFF THAT MUCH IN THE RETURN GAME
I CAN DEFINITELY KEEP THE NEXT GAME!!
AS PROOF, I WAS ONLY A STEP SHORT OF RETURNING THE DOWN-THE-LINE SHOT THAT USED TO GO IN WITH AN ACE.
I WAS SOMEHOW ABLE TO RETURN THE LAST ONE BECAUSE I WAS STARTING TO UNDERSTAND IT...

I WAS SOMEHOW ABLE TO STOP THIS DOWNWARD TREND,
BUT IF HE WERE TO BREAK THE NEXT GAME BY ANY CHANCE, I'LL BE AT A HUGE DISADVANTAGE...
FOR THE NEXT GAME, I HAVE TO CRAM THESE INTO MY HEAD AND DO MY BEST FOR A KEEP
カキカキカキカキ
ゴク
カキカキカキカキ

I DON'T GET IT...
カチ カチ カチ カチ カチ
YOU'RE IN THE FINALS OF KANAGAWA, WHICH IS CONSIDERED PRETTY HIGH-LEVEL.
WHY'S A GUY WHO MANAGED TO GET THIS FAR HAVING TROUBLE PLAYING A LEFT-HANDER
カチ カチ カチ
NO...
IT WAS THE SAME FOR HIM, TOO...


HUH? YOU DON'T KNOW? —Ah, you're that strong?
IT'S MY FIRST TIME ENCOUNTERING IT IN A MATCH.
BUT CAN YOU TELL ME HOW MANY POINTS ARE NEEDED TO WIN A TIE-BREAKER?
I'M SORRY,
Ike Souji (12)


EVEN IF HE'S NOT ON IKE'S LEVEL...
AN IMBALANCE DUE TO HIS GROWTH BEING TOO FAST...

I CAN'T TAKE YOUR GROWTH SPEED LIGHTLY.
I HAVE TO TAKE YOU DOWN WHILE I CAN.

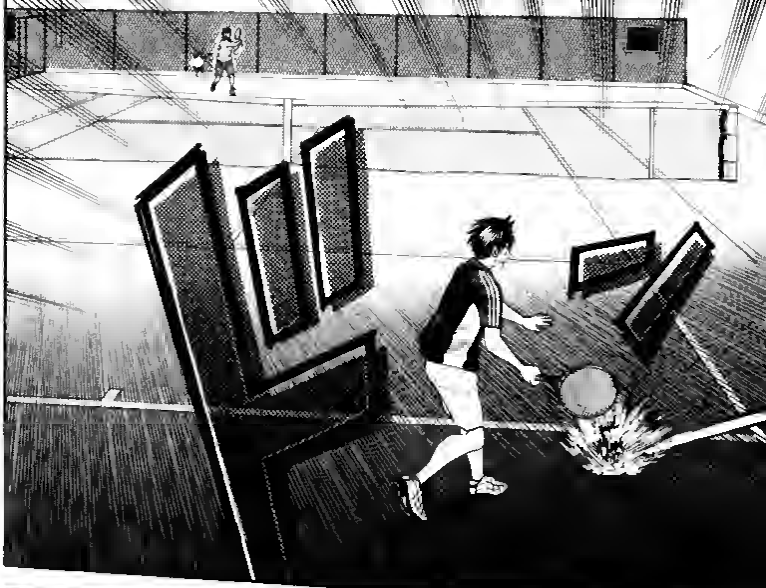
TIME!
FIRST OFF, THE SERVE...

HA!
ORYA!
NEXT... GO FOR HIS BACKHAND!!

IF IT'S A LEFT-HANDED BACKHAND, I CAN SOMEHOW MANAGE, EVEN IF I'M NOT USED TO IT!
HA!
EVEN IF I'M FOCUSED ON GOING FOR BACKHANDS, IF I CAN FIND THE RIGHT TIMING .
HA!
GO FOR THE FOREHAND!
WATCH OUT FOR THE LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND CROSS!!
I'D LIKE TO MOVE TO THE NET AT THIS POINT, BUT IF THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE...

HERE IT COMES!
UNTIL I GET USED TO IT, GO WITH A SAFE 11/36 CONTROL, AND
ALTHOUGH THE TIMING OF HIS STROKE IS SLOWER THAN A RIGHT-HANDED BACKHAND, THE BALL'S STRONGER.
HA!

OKAY, GO IN!!



ARAYA, DON'T BOTHER!! KEEP ATTACKING ON THE RETURN GAME!!
EVEN IF IT WAS HIS MISS, I WAS ABLE TO GET A POINT WITH MY BACKHAND FROM HIS FOREHAND CROSS.
GOOD WORK, MARUO!! YOU KEPT YOUR GROUND!!

OUT, 15 - LOVE.
I WAS AIMING TOO HARD.

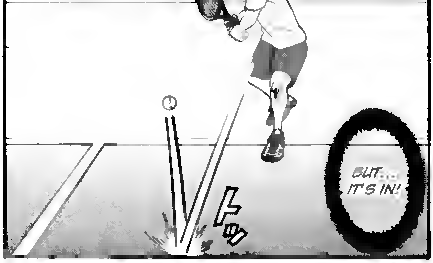
I CAN DO THIS!!
YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY IS TO NOT GET SWAYED BY THE AWKWARDNESS OF YOUR BACKHAND.
THAT'S RIGHT... ALL YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW IS AGGRESSIVELY STACK UP SAFE STRATEGIES.
Ah!
110ア-ト
IF I CAN TAKE THE ADVANTAGE WITH MY SERVE...
HA!

REPEAT LEFT-HANDED COUNTER STRATEGIES WHILE PLAYING IT SAFE.
ONCE YOU FEEL YOUR BODY GETTING USED TO IT...
TRY INCREASING THE DIFFICULTY OF THE CONTROL LITTLE BY LITTLE WITHIN SUITABLE LIMITS.
BY TAKING AWAY THE PHYSICAL FACTORS OF MY MISTAKES, I CAN WEAKEN THE PSYCHO-LOGICAL FACTORS.

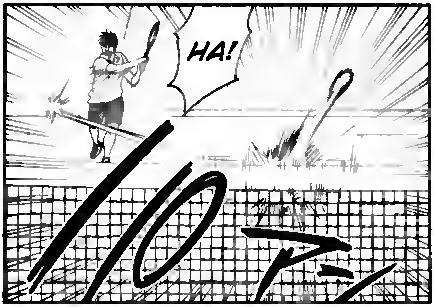
HA!
GAME, MARUO. 1 - 0.
YES...! KEEP!!
YES!! GOOD WORK EI-CHAN!
YUP! SEEMS LIKE HE'S MAKING HIS WAY BACK UP.
GO MARUO-KUN!
NO, NOT YET...
I JUST MANAGED TO STOP MY OWN DOWNFALL.

AND DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO BREAK AT ALL.
IN RETURN GAMES, I'VE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE WITH LEFT-HANDED SERVES THE WHOLE TIME,
WHAT I LEARNED FROM THE FIRST SET IS THAT
ATTACKS THAT DISRUPT THE TEMPO OR TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE ARE EFFECTIVE AGAINST HIS POWER & SPEED TENNIS
ALSO, LEFT-HANDED STROKES . HIS SERVES ARE ESPECIALLY POWERFUL
AND HOW I'LL TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE WILL DETERMINE MY PATH TO A BREAK .
THEN HOW I'LL RETURN HIS SERVES .

A STEP AND A HALF OUTSIDE, TWO BALLS FORWARD!!
RGH~


BUT... IT'S IN!

SHOOT... I DIDN'T MAKE IT BECAUSE IT WAS TOO FAST.


HA!

!?

LOVE - 15.

WHAT KIND OF MISS WAS THAT?

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RAWs: Share
Translator: Auggia
Proofreader: Galooza
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WHAT? DID ARAYA-KUN MAKE A MISTAKE JUST NOW?
#120 POSITIVE PLAN

WAS IT BECAUSE THE BALL WAS A LOT SLOWER THAN HE EXPECTED?
I WAS SWINGING PRETTY FAST....
IT SHOULD'VE BEEN A CHANCE BALL FOR ARAYA-KUN
MY RETURN DIDN'T MAKE CONTACT PROPERLY, SO IT WAS MOVING SLOW.

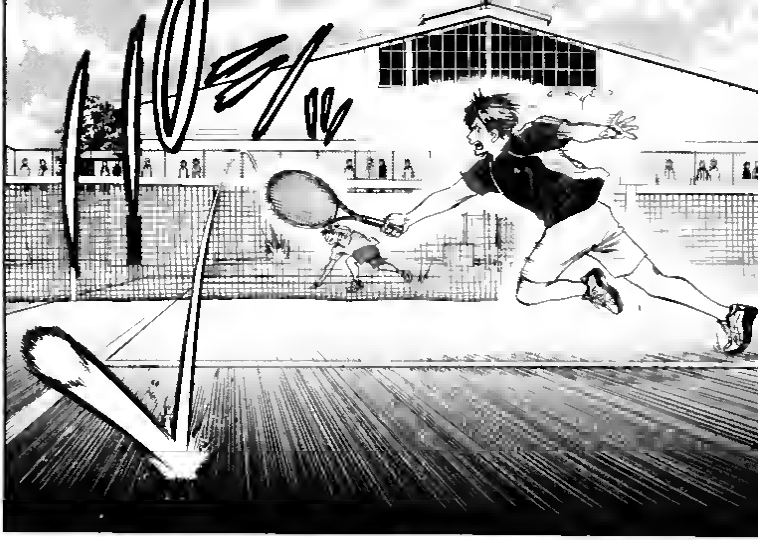
IT MEANS IT "TOOK HIM BY SURPRISE," EVEN IF IT WASN'T INTENTIONAL.
IF THAT'S THE CASE .

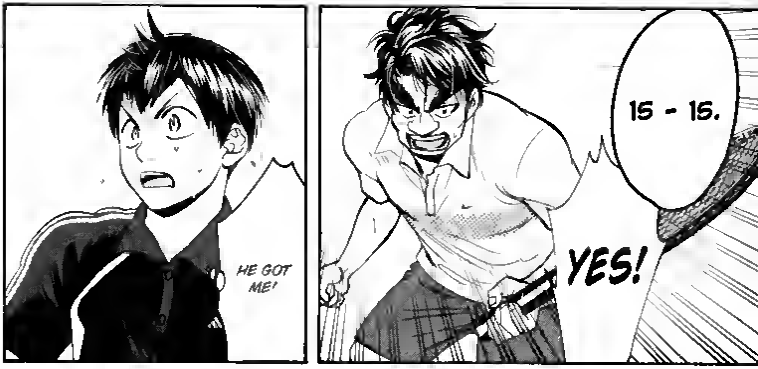
I KNEW "TAKING HIM BY SURPRISE" WAS AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY, BUT I WASN'T ABLE TO EXECUTE IT BECAUSE I WAS TOO BUSY FIGURING OUT HOW TO FIGHT A LEFT-HANDER
BUT NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND IT, ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO GET USED TO IT
I HAVE TO MOVE FORWARD
HOW CAN I "TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE" AND GET A BREAK
AGAINST HIS OVERWHELMING SPEED AND POWER?
?!
!

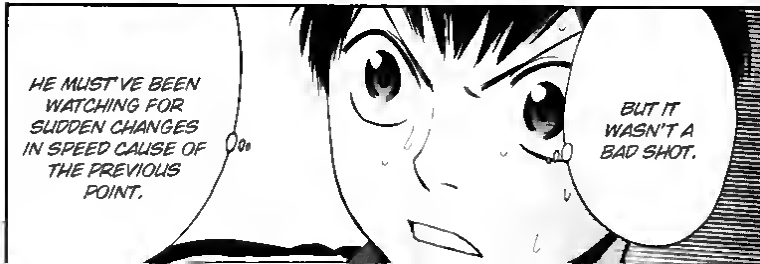
AN ESCAPING SLICE ON AD COURT!
I SOMEHOW RETURNED IT!
RGH~
IMAGINE HITTING A STEP AND A HALF OUTSIDE. THREE BALLS FORWARD
FOR THIS FOREHAND, HIT IT ONE STEP FASTER THAN I'M USED TO
ORA!

I'LL TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE!!

AH!
HE'S FAST!!
HE SAW THROUGH IT!!




HE GOT ME!
15 - 15.
YES!


HE MUST'VE BEEN WATCHING FOR SUDDEN CHANGES IN SPEED CAUSE OF THE PREVIOUS POINT.
BUT IT WASN'T A BAD SHOT.

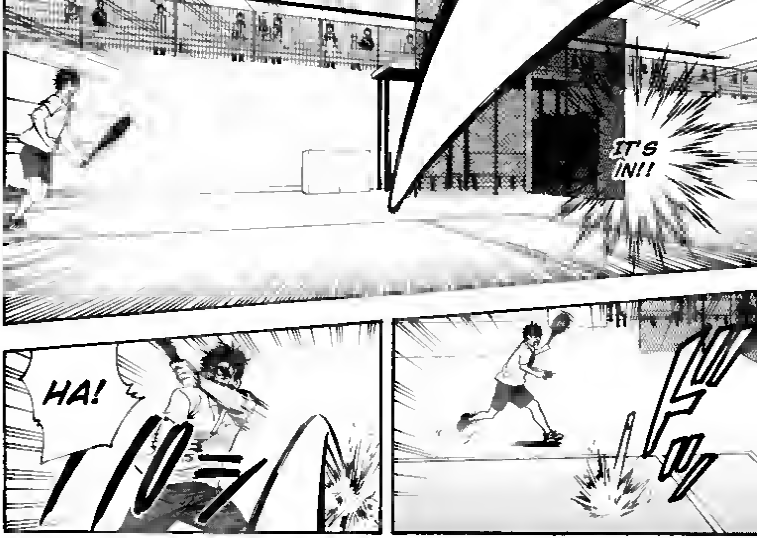
A BIGGER ADVANTAGE...
AND THIS IS MY RETURN GAME.
MY DROP SHOTS MIGHT NOT WORK UNLESS I'M AT A MORE ADVANTAGEOUS SITUATION.
HA!

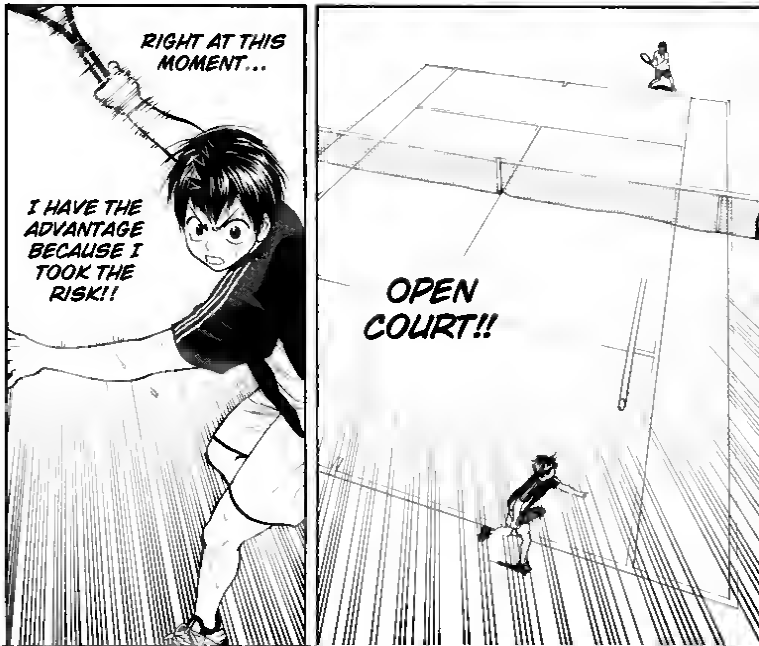
HA!
OUT, 30 - 15.
HUH!? HE SUDDENLY TRIED TO RETURN IT AT FULL POWER!?
THAT WAS A BIT TOO FORCEFUL, THOUGH.
YOU CAN'T BEAT ARAYA UNLESS YOU RISK AT LEAST THAT MUCH.

I WANTED IT TO GO IN IF ALL POSSIBLE, BUT... AS LONG AS IT LEADS ME TO MY NEXT MOVE...
TAKING RISKS IS A GIVEN IN BREAKS.
...
I HAVE TO GET THE ADVANTAGE, EVEN IF JUST FOR AN INSTANT.
I CAN'T "TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE" WHEN HE'S SENSITIVE TO VARIATIONS IN SPEED.
SLICE IN AN AD COURT WILL ESCAPE A STEP AND A HALF OUTWARD

40 - 15.
SERVICE ACE!!
CRAP... HE CAME CHANGING HIS COURSE...

LOOK CAREFULLY,
AND GET READY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...
THAT'S RIGHT... HE CAN CHANGE THE DIRECTION USING HIS WRIST AT THE LAST MINUTE.
HA!
HIT WITH FULL POWER!!


IT'S IN!!
HA!


RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT...
I HAVE THE ADVANTAGE BECAUSE I TOOK THE RISK!!
OPEN COURT!!

1/2
1/10

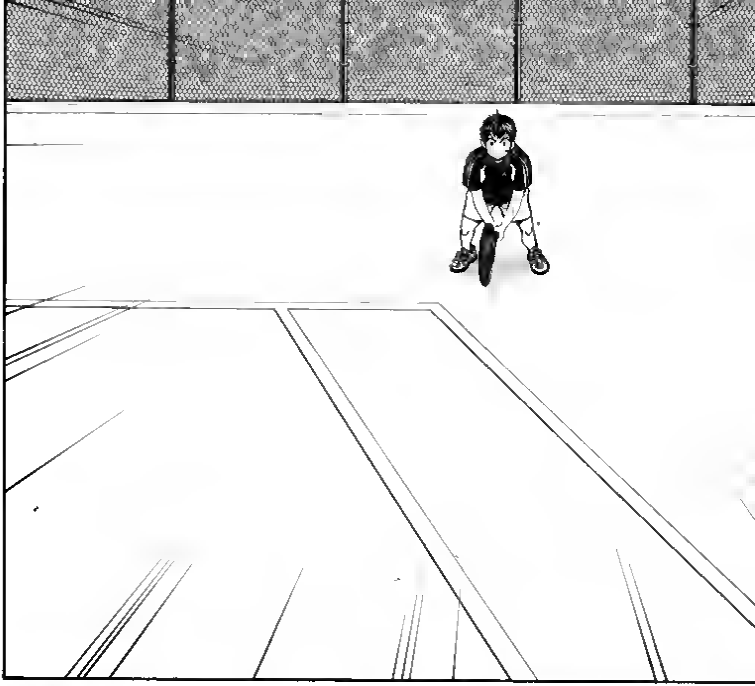
タッ
TCH.
40-30.

メリッ
WOW!! A DROP SHOT WITH UNBELIEVABLE TIMING!!
ISN'T IT AMAZING FOR ARAYA TO NOT BE ABLE TO REACH IT?
HIS CONTROL WAS GREAT.
YES!!

IT'S A HUGE ADVANCEMENT TO HAVE GAINED AN ATTACK CHOICE IN THIS SITUATION.
PROBABLY... BUT THAT'S PRECISELY WHY HE SHOULD BE USING IT.
BUT COULDN'T HE HAVE MADE IT WITHOUT GOING FOR THE DROP SHOT?
SINCE THOSE PATTERNS WERE WORKING, ARAYA REACTED TO THE DROP SHOT A STEP TOO LATE.
MARUO SO FAR HAS BEEN HITTING THOSE TO THE OPEN COURT THEN MOVING UP TO THE NET.

THAT TOTALLY TOOK ME OFF GUARD.
SO HE'S PLANNING TO INCREASE HIS ATTACK PATTERNS FROM HERE ON...
HMM...
BRING IT ON.

I PROBABLY WOULD'VE MADE THE POINT, EVEN IF I HAD HIT DEEP INTO THE OPEN COURT.
I NEVER QUESTIONED THAT CHOICE UP TILL NOW,
BUT ONCE I'M AT AN ADVANTAGE, OTHER OPTIONS WOULD BE EQUALLY AS EFFECTIVE LIKE THIS.
OKAY.. THE PROBLEM RIGHT NOW IS HOW TO RETURN HIS SERVES ON MY DISADVANTAGEOUS AD COURT AND STEAL THE ADVANTAGE.
THAT POINT JUST NOW MIGHT HAVE BEEN REALLY CRITICAL.
THEN, IN THIS CASE..
スタ
スク
EVEN THOUGH HIS WIDE SERVE CUTS A STEP AND A HALF OUTWARD,
WIDE
A STEP AND A HALF
CENTER
IF I MOVE TOO QUICKLY, HE'LL SWITCH TO THE CENTER.



HE SEEMS TO BE STANDING PRETTY FAR OUT...

HUH?

...

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RECRUITMENT

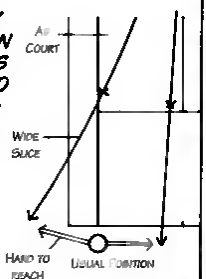
WE ARE IN DIRE NEED OF CLEANERS
(MOSTLY REDRAWERS) FOR THIS SERIES:

DIAMOND NO ACE

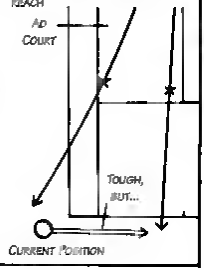
APPLY AT FORUM.IMANGASCANS.ORG
OR IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, PLEASE JOIN AT
IRCHIGHWAY #IMANGASCANS

1
2
Araya
6
0
Maruo
3
1
HUH?
EI-CHAN SEEMS TO BE STANDING A LOT FURTHER TO THE SIDE THAN USUAL. IS THAT OKAY?
HIS USUAL RETURN POSITION
#121 DECISION
YEAH. IT'S A PRETTY COMMON COUNTERMEASURE AGAINST LEFT-HANDED SERVES
WELL, JUST WATCH.
OH... I THINK IT'S FINE.
HUH? REALLY?

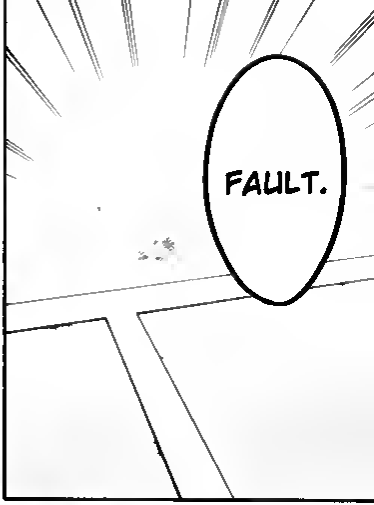
IF I STAY AT MY NORMAL POSITION IN AD COURT, IT'S PRETTY TOUGH TO REACH THE LEFT-HANDED SPECIALTY WIDE SLICE.



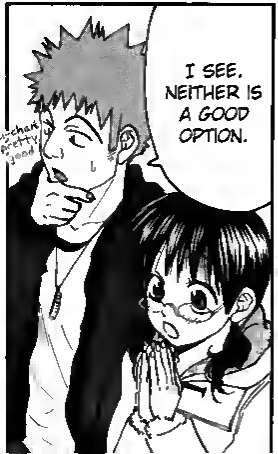
IF I'M HERE, GETTING A CENTER WILL BE TOUGH, BUT I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE WIDE.

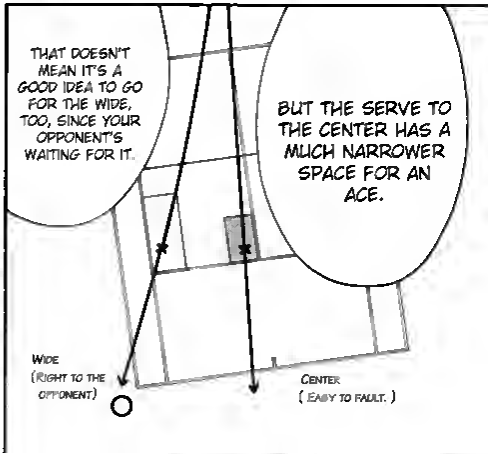


CHEAP TRICKS...!
I'M USED TO THOSE KINDS OF...
ORAA!


FAULT.

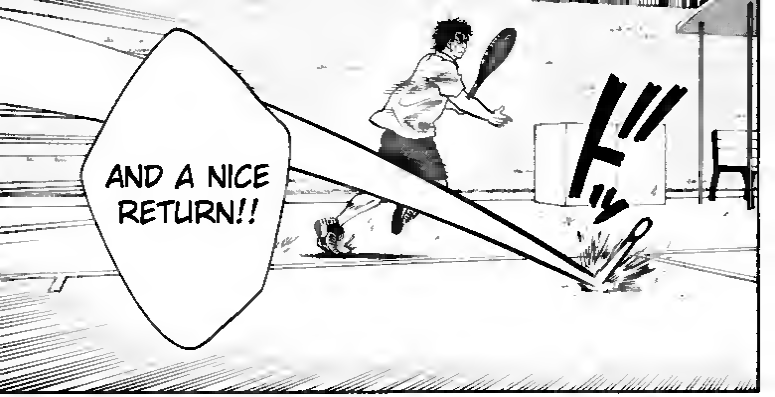
IF THE CENTER'S WIDE OPEN SO BLUNTLY, YOU CAN'T HELP BUT GO FOR IT.
Yikes!
WOW!! WAY TOO CLOSE...


I SEE. NEITHER IS A GOOD OPTION.
Eschar pretty good

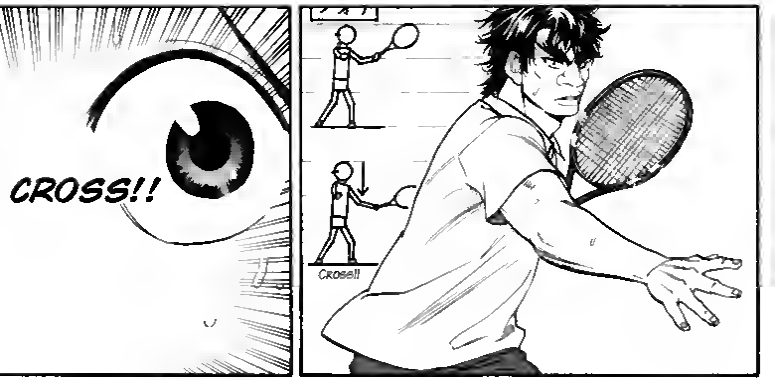

THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO GO FOR THE WIDE, TOO, SINCE YOUR OPPONENT'S WAITING FOR IT.
BUT THE SERVE TO THE CENTER HAS A MUCH NARROWER SPACE FOR AN ACE.
WIDE (RIGHT TO THE OPPONENT)
CENTER (EASY TO FAULT.)

OF COURSE, ARAYA'S FULLY AWARE OF THEM.
HE MUST'VE CHOSE THE CENTER HAVING CONSIDERED ALL THAT.
BUT THAT'S THE PART THAT'S IN MARUO'S FAVOR.
ARAYA NOW HAS TO THINK ABOUT SOMETHING THAT HE WAS ABLE TO DO WITHOUT THINKING.
THAT WAS DANGEROUS CAUSE IT WAS A FLAT,
BUT IF IT HAD MORE OF A SPIN, IT'D BE SLOWER, SO I SHOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN IT SOMEHOW.
OKAY NOW, THE SECOND SERVE.
IF IT BECOMES A DEUCE, I'LL HAVE A SHOT FOR A BREAK!

BUT SINCE IT'S HIS SECOND SERVE, IT'S MUCH SLOWER.
MOREOVER, SINCE I HAVE SOME LEISURE WITH MY POSITION,
A WIDE SLICE!!
HA!!
I CAN GO ALL OUT!!
RETURN DASH!!


AND A NICE RETURN!!

BRING IT ON, COUNTER!!


CROSS!!
Cross!!

HA!

RGH~
SHOOT. ALL I DID WAS TOUCH IT...
おおっ
DEUCE.

I- I MADE IT EVEN THOUGH I BARELY TOUCHED IT!!
EVEN THOUGH HE MANAGED TO HIT IT DEEP, AND I WASN'T ABLE TO RETURN IT PROPERLY...
OKAY...
TWO POINTS LEFT FOR A BREAK!!
AS I EXPECTED, THAT DROP SHOT WAS PRETTY EFFECTIVE.
IT MANAGED TO SLOW DOWN ARAYA-KUN'S DECISION FOR A MOMENT.
FOR RETURNS ON THIS SIDE, GO ALL OUT.
BUT SINCE HIS SERVES ARE FAST, I DON'T NEED A LARGE SWING OR A LOT OF POWER
IMAGINE PUSHING MY WEIGHT TO THE BALL AND WATCH OUT FOR THE TIMING

HAA!
HE GOT PUSHED BACK!
RGH...
HA!

N-NET IN!!
ADVAN-TAGE, MARUO!

MARUO'S GOT THE GAME RIGHT NOW.
IT'S NOT LIKE ARAYA WAS DOING BAD.
OH...!? IT'S MARUO'S BREAK POINT THIS TIME!!

IT WENT IN CAUSE HE WENT ALL OUT.
It's not just luck
LUCK'S ON YOUR SIDE, TOO!
GOOD WORK, EI-CHAN !!

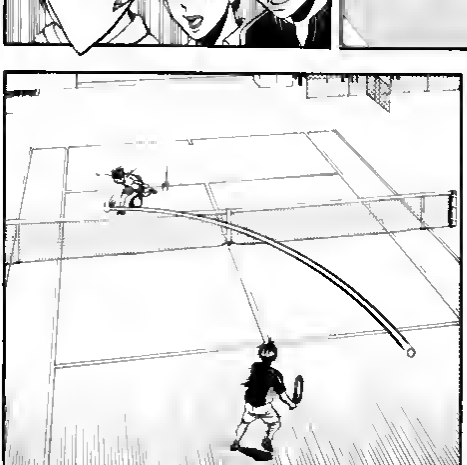
...IT'S THIS
FOR A RETURN ON AD COURT...
HERE IT IS...! IF I TAKE THIS, I'LL BREAK!!

THAT POSITION AGAIN!

I HAVE TO GET MY FIRST SERVE IN, NO MATTER WHAT ...
ドキ
ドキ
IF THAT'S THE CASE...
ドキ
ドキ

WIDE!!
IF I'M AT AN ADVAN-TAGE...
IT'S IN...!!
HA!

ANOTHER DROP!



110
キン
HA!
ドゴ

GAME, MARUO. 2 - 0. SECOND SET!
I GOT IT!!!
YEEES SSS!!
FOR REAL!! ARAYA FINALLY LOST HIS SERVE GAME!!

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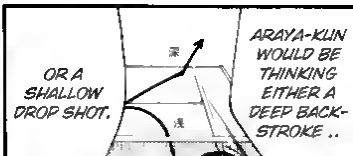
#122
INNER BATTLE

CALM DOWN. COMPOSE YOURSELF!!
NO... IT'S JUST ONE BREAK IN THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND SET!!
I'M STILL AT A STATE WHERE I HAVE TO PLAY SAFE AGAINST HIS LEFT-HANDED CROSSES.
SINCE I LOST MY FIRST SET, I CAN'T WIN IF I DON'T GET THIS SET...
AND THIS IS MY SERVE GAME.
BUT . I LEARNED THAT I HAVE LOT OF OPTIONS IN MY OFFENSE IF I CAN CLAIM THE ADVANTAGE
ONCE MY FIRST SERVE GOES IN, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT I'LL GAIN A WIDE RANGE OF OPTIONS.
SINCE MY OPPONENT GETS BAFFLED BY THE DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES, I CAN CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

OKAY... HERE I GO!!
NICE SERVE!!
HA!
HA!

HERE IT IS...
SO, WHAT SHOULD I CHOOSE HERE...

A TOPSPIN THAT ESCAPES OUTWARD...


ARAYA-KUN WOULD BE THINKING EITHER A DEEP BACK-STROKE ..
OR A SHALLOW DROP SHOT.

THEN THE ONE IN BETWEEN

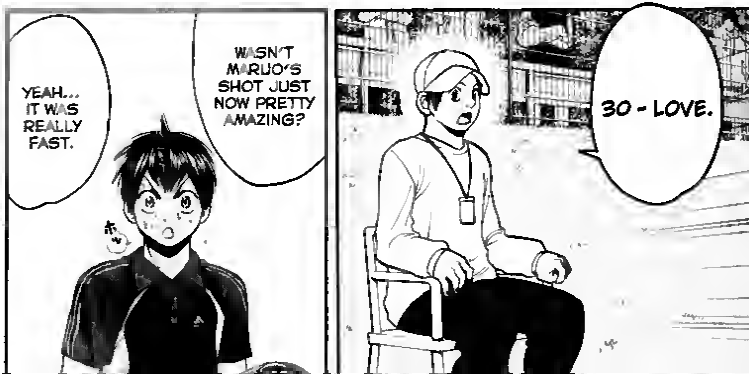
THEN, I CAN FINISH IT WITH—
BECAUSE HE WAS EXPECTING IT TO BE SHORTER
HIS BALANCE IS OFF
HA!

ARAYA-KUN'S FAST TEMPO IS CRUMBLING!
YES!!
15 - LOVE.

HA!

HE'S FIGHTING IT OFF, EVEN WITH SLOW BALLS.
RYA!
IF I HIT A STRONG ONE NOW...
IT'LL BE A POWER SHOT!!
HA!

ORYAAA!


YEAH... IT WAS REALLY FAST.
WASN'T MARUO'S SHOT JUST NOW PRETTY AMAZING?
30 - LOVE.

IT'S SO EASY TO TELL.
ARAYA'S IRRI-TATED.
イキッ
ANIKI'S PICKING HIS SHOTS PRETTY WELL.
YEAH... YOU CAN MAKE IT FEEL FAST, EVEN IF YOU DON'T HIT FAST BALLS.
THAT'S A STRATEGY THAT VARIES THE PACE OF THE GAME, RIGHT?
AND "CHANGE OF PACE" IS USUALLY PRETTY EFFECTIVE AGAINST OPPO-NENTS WHO USE SPEED AND POWER.

"YOU WON'T LOSE IF YOU CAN GET TO EVERY BALL AND HIT IT BACK WITH COMPLETE CONTROL."
IT'S THE TRUE ESSENCE OF HIS TENNIS PHILOSOPHY.
YUP. PEOPLE ARE GENERALLY MORE COMFORTABLE STAYING AT THE SAME PACE, SO MATCHES TEND TO SETTLE ON A SET RHYTHM.
SO YOU'RE PUTTING CHANGES TO THAT TO GAIN THE ADVANTAGE
BY CONTROLLING ALL SORTS OF BALLS TO GO AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS OR SPINS
MARUO'S SHOTS ARE AVERAGE IN TERMS OF POWER, BUT HE'S GOT GREAT CONTROL, AND DOESN'T HAVE ANY WEAKNESSES.
YOU COULD SAY THOSE TYPES ARE BORN TO USE "CHANGE OF PACE."
IF HIS "CHANGE OF PACE" GETS EVEN BETTER,
HE SHOULD BECOME MORE THAN CAPABLE OF FIGHTING IN TOP STAGES OF THE NATIONALS

THERE WAS ONE GENIUS IN KANAGAWA WHO DID JUST THAT.
Iwasa Hiromi.
IN TERMS OF BEING ABLE TO HIT ANY BALL ANYWHERE HE WANTS DESPITE THE LACK OF POWER,
WELL, HE WOULDN'T BE HAVING SO MUCH TROUBLE IF IT WAS AS EASY AS IT SOUNDS.
I'LL GO ALL OUT HERE...
IT'S 30 - LOVE IN MY SERVE GAME
SHOOT.
WELL, IT'S FINE AS LONG AS 70% OF IT GOES IN...

HUH!?
40 - LOVE.
WASN'T IT A FAULT?
WAS THAT... IN?
UMM... I'M NOT SURE.
AH... Y-YES...
WAS THAT ONE IN?
HEY...
ギロ
IT FELT LIKE A FAULT...
BUT THAT'S FOR THE JUDGE TO DECIDE.

"ANGER" IS NO GOOD.
I LEARNED FROM PLAYING HIM LAST YEAR.
....THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO SHOUT, BUT...
DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP...
IT MIGHT CALM DOWN FOR A MOMENT, BUT IT ALWAYS ENDS UP GETTING IN THE WAY OF YOUR GAME.
EVEN IF YOU THROW YOUR ANGER AT SOMETHING OR SOMEONE ELSE, OR EVEN IF YOU TRY TO KILL IT FROM INSIDE...
THAT'S WHY...

ROAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRR!
ビリ
ビリ

YOU RELEASE YOUR ANGER...
AT THE SKY.
バキッ
HIS EXPRESSION CHANGED...!

TAKE HIM DOWN!!
WHEN ARAYA-KUN'S TRYING TO STAND BACK UP...
HA!

TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 14

Baby Steps

#113 AFTER THAT

I'LL NEED THEM WHEN I PLAY AGAINST YOU AGAIN!
BUT YOU WON'T NEED THESE FOR YOUR MATCHES, RIGHT?
AH, SURE.
HEY, EI-CHAN LET ME SEE THE NOTES YOU TOOK LAST MATCH.
Here
WOAH, WOAH!
I'm gonna win next time!
ALL THE MORE REASON FOR ME TO GET RID OF THEM!
TH-THERE'S NO POINT. IT'S TOO LATE NOW!
IT'S A BIT AWKWARD ...
WOW~ THERE'S EVEN STUFF I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE TILL NOW!
HEY HEY, GIVE ME THIS PAGE.
I KNOW EVERY LAST DETAIL ABOUT NACCHAN, AND WON'T FORGET A SINGLE ONE.
STOP STOP !!
GRIP
SURE... WAIT A SEC.
ANNOYING ...
I'LL COPY THEM FOR YOU, SO
Phew
I'M SORRY
WHAT'S WITH THE "HUH?"!! ARE YOU TRYING TO RIP IT OUT!?
Those eyes are scary!!
HUH?

There's no room left for an afterword...

See you next volume!

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